

Summoned

By: Sereo

OC that has seen the anime and is thrown into the hotd world. [Credit goes to the beta that checked up to ch 29 with me. DiscereEstVivet (- WARNING- Chapters 30 to 35 have dot '...' spams and are likely to not be remade)] NO LEMONS HERE MA DUDES, look elsewhere for that.

Status: complete

Published: 2019-09-22

Updated: 2023-07-17

Words: 582338

Chapters: 86

Rated: Fiction M - Language: English - Genre: Romance/Drama -
Characters: Saeko B., Saya T., OC - Reviews: 1,025 - Favs: 1,951 -
Follows: 2,141

Original source: <https://www.fanfiction.net/s/13393132/1/Summoned>

Exported with the assistance of FicHub.net

Summoned

[Introduction](#)

[A sunny day](#)

[decisions](#)

[Plans](#)

[Guns guns guns](#)

[Night raid](#)

[Calm? before the storm](#)

[At the gates](#)

[Skiping school](#)

[Going on a trip](#)

[The bailout](#)

[Hope you don't mind walking](#)

[Break? what's a break?](#)

[To the rescue](#)

[Takagi Estate it is then](#)

[New house, new problems](#)

[Electrifying](#)

[Electrifying Pt2](#)

[Hit the books](#)

[no such thing as over-prepared](#)

[Samurai, i am not](#)

[Lights out](#)

[Departure](#)

[Parking space](#)

[A town of shops](#)

[Do you have an appointment?](#)

[Return to the mall](#)

[Return to the mall Pt 2](#)
[A castle made of sand](#)
[Unwanted luggage](#)
[Fachoo!](#)
[Just call the police](#)
[No more hand-holding](#)
[No more hand-holding.pt 2](#)
[calculated risk](#)
[Uncalculated Outcome](#)
[Running late for school](#)
[Back to class](#)
[Your driver's license please](#)
[It's a supermarket](#)
[What did you really want?](#)
[A path to choose](#)
[On the road](#)
[Strolling down the beach](#)
[Hitomi](#)
[Gone fishing](#)
[On the road once again](#)
[Destination reached](#)
[Convoy.](#)
[New destination reached](#)
[Afterburner](#)
[Purple fire](#)
[Pink Tornado](#)
[Break time's over](#)
[Sightseeing](#)
[Want some Tea?](#)
[Splitting paths](#)

[Movie night](#)
[Movie night pt2](#)
[Movie night pt3](#)
[Movie night pt4](#)
[Stock up](#)
[Return to the airport](#)
[A happy, reunion](#)
[Wake up call](#)
[Wake up call pt2](#)
[Flyby](#)
[uncalibration](#)
[Jerk-y](#)
[Riverside](#)
[Riverside pt2](#)
[Everything is fine](#)
[Count your fingers](#)
[I need your car, your nurse, your bike](#)
[Get set](#)
[One the road, for the final time](#)
[Roadtrip through the woods](#)
[Outer wall](#)
[Mark](#)
[Take two](#)
[Closing shop](#)
[co-op](#)
[Lights in](#)
[The old fashioned way](#)
[Outing pt1](#)
[Outing pt2](#)
[A Rainy day](#)

A sunny day

Some info:

The story will be told from a first-person perspective, the OC's

"This is talking" "Go jump over that fence"

(This is thinking) (I will jump over that fence)

This is narration/action- I Jumped over that fence

-Extra-

Thank you.

So, where was I...

Oh right...

(Yet another sunny day again huh? Still, ain't most days sunny here?
In Japan?

It, must be about 3 weeks since I 'arrived' here. And I still have a hard time coming to terms with it to be honest.)

Right now, I was sitting at my school desk, which was located in the back corner of the class. And while the class was still in session. I, was just staring outside. Towards the school's gate.

(... Uhh, it's weird. I have always been fascinated by this country.

I grew up watching anime, and it didn't take long before I started playing video games as well. I've actually lost track of how many hours I spent on both. Hell, even my initial understanding of

Japanese came from these two things. And right now, it honestly feels like total... bullshit.)

Just as I let out a small sigh, the sound of a ringing bell echoed throughout the school, signaling the end of class...

I quickly snap out of my inner thoughts and started to pick up my stuff. Yet the moment I raised my head to look at the exit on the far side of the class, I spotted my homeroom teacher, gesturing for me to go to him.

(Really now? Ughh... good job me, I guess that's what you get for not paying attention to the class in plain sight.)

I take a deep breath and walk up to the front of the teacher's desk.

"Naier Sepfier?" The middle-aged man behind it, whose frown seemed to be a permanent addition to his face, stared at me with what I can only call an 'I don't want to be here' expression. His eyes pretty much telling me that he would rather be at his local cafe playing mahjong rather than waste his time on me.

"Yes, sir." I answered back.

"I know that you came here as an exchange student, and adjusting to a new foreign environment can take time. But it has been three weeks, I would prefer if you actually started paying some attention to the classes you are supposed to be present at, Sepfier." He said as his eyes practically drilled holes into me. I guess to him, not paying attention in his class equals to me not respecting his authority. Not that I'm surprised though, teachers or overall, people with authority over somebody can be like that.

"Yes, of course. I'm sorry about that, it will not happen again." I answered, trying to sound as sincere as I can.

"... Good, you may go now." Seemingly appeased with my answer, the teacher returns to his papers and signals me with his hand to

leave.

With that confrontation finished, I picked my bag from the ground next to me and start heading outside.

(While I really don't give much of a damn about his ramblings, it's not because I have something personal against him. It's simply because soon, none of this crap will really matter...)

I close the class door behind me, and start heading down the hallway to my right, my destination being the stairs that led to the lower floors, and towards the school gym.

(The lunch break should last about, 40 minutes. Uhhh, it should give me enough time.)

Looking at the watch in my phone I nod to myself and start heading towards the hallway.

(For the last month since arriving at. Let's just call this place Japan for now. I have been pushing myself non-stop. From physical training like running, sprinting, parkour and endurance tests, to looking up guides on how to use tools and weapons. Hell, I even took classes in armed self-defense and went to the gun range, multiple times a day too.

Not a very easy thing to do considering I'm still a high-schooler, aka under-aged. Meaning, I had to go the extra mile just to get permission to even be allowed to enter the gun range. And why would I do all this crap? Why I would not just stay home and play video games all day? Because... honestly if I stay still now. If I leave myself space to 'think'. I think I'll end up 'offing' myself...)

I let out a small sigh as I glance towards the giant glass pane windows to my left, the sky outside being a bright blue.

(And as one might expect, all these things cost money, and they cost a lot. While not really official yet, I'm actually in pretty heavy debt. I

have already reached the limit on the credit card that was given to me, and also sold everything inside my, rented house. In other words, stuff that is not really mine. And no, it's not because I want to land my ass in jail. It's because I'm betting on the fact that very soon, the debt, and all the 'stolen' stuff will no longer matter.)

And as I finally reached the staircase at the end of the hallway and began to walk down. I saw a lone student leaning against the railing, his back turned to me, so I could not see his face, yet his posture having the words *dejection* written all over it.

(And then, there's 'this' damn guy, in the same spot since the first day I arrived. The same depressed attitude, day in, day out. Now, truth be told though, I have my own reasons to cringe at his attitude. The first reason one being that for all his depression, this guy is actually what you might call 'The very lucky one'. And now that I was 'here', I am actually pretty jealous of what he has. Or, what he will have...

The second reason though, oh the second reason makes my stomach tie up into knots till I want to throw up. The reason? Simple really. I know the guy, without actually 'knowing' him, and not in a stalker-ish kind of fashion. I don't swing that way...

The student in front of me is Takashi Komuro, and his existence 'here' verified that I should NOT be here in the flesh...)

I slowly walk up to Takashi after descending the stairs.

(Uhh, I was never good at socializing... but well... fuck it. Time to creep out the dejected dude, this needs to happen sooner or later.)

I clear my throat.

"Excuse me?" And speak up

(Well, I'm far more nervous than I'd thought I'd be, am I really that bad at striking up conversations with strangers?)

Takashi seems to react to my voice and turns his head to me, one eyebrow raised in question while staring at my face with an odd expression.

"What, who are you?" He asks.

"Naier Sepfier, I'm a transfer student. Uhh, look, I didn't mean to bother you. But ever since I arrived here I keep seeing you on the same spot every day with a dejected look on your face... you ok?" I fold my arms while finishing my sentence

(... yu-ok? Really me? For real? Is that the best you could come up with you damn monke?)

The guy just... stares at me. I didn't know if he was surprised, or just plain annoyed.

" I've been better. Why do you care though?" He turns his back to me as he speaks and starts to stare away towards the school's field again.

"Well, from where I'm from people tend to react to somebody grinding his face against the floor. I kept seeing you here, looking like you are about to jump off." I came up for a reason on the spot as he kept staring away from me.

(Well shit, I can't tell him. 'Hur-Dur me know stuff'. Plus he doesn't seem to be in a talking mood anyway.)

"Huhhh. Well, my bad. Didn't mean to bother you, I'll get out of your space. Just don't go off doing something stupid all aight? No shit mode last forever." I raised both my arms as I turned around to leave.

(Yea... stuff can always get worse. Much, much worse. For the rest of the world at least...)

As I started walking away from Takashi, the only thing I heard from him was a sigh...

With that whole 'socialisation' over, I headed down to the bottom floor, and towards my initial destination, the gym...

And couple of minutes later, I was there. The only person inside being me.

(Empty huh? No surprise there, that's why I decided to come here in the first place, most people are probably eating or relaxing right now. Or sulking by the stairs. Well, whatever, got my spare shirt in my bag so. It is time to run some laps...)

And with that, I started to jog. Lapping around the gym's track...

As I kept running around the gym track, I tried to empty my mind so I could focus on running...

Yet, all it took to lose whatever focus I had. Was to look up and see the school's banner.

(Fujimi Academy...)

"Why, the hell am I even here?" I curse under my breath as I stop running with a groan.

"Fuck, come on. I need to collect my thoughts here. I'm running short on time, and I need to make the best of it while I can. Focus goddamn it!" I throw a few slaps to my face with both hands as I start running again...

(My name, is Naier Sepfier. I'm 17 years old, and I am an exchange student from Europe. I can speak both English and Japanese. Why did I say Europe and not an actual country? It's because it doesn't matter right now, what matters is where I'm at. And that is the Fujimi Academy in Japan, with three days left before the biggest pile of shit ever seen by humanity hits the worldwide fan. And what do I mean

by shit? Well, I'm talking about the god-damn end of the world via an express zombie apocalypse...

As to why I know all this crap? It's because I've seen it. And not in any future vision type of bullshit. I have seen it, in a god-damn anime. Hehh, yea, even when I'm telling to myself it sounds fucking ridiculous.

If somebody had told me that I would be waking up inside a damn anime, I would have kindly asked them to be in one where perma-death and flesh-eating corpses are flat out banned...

And speaking of Death. I have been thinking about this since I arrived here. As to why am I here...

I mean, sure I've seen one too many animes to know the otherworld genre trope. So what? I Pepsied and now I am here because, I don't know? Illuminati and rainbow puking unicorns? I mean I 'know' who 'I' am. I still have memories of my 'past' life, that's the reason why I know what is supposed to happen in the first place. Among other things, I also remember when I started my mandatory army training because my country was moronic, or when I got my first video game system. Though there are some things that I have forgotten too, like my old native language for example...

But, I also know who 'I' am now. Or, who I was 'here'. It honestly feels more like switching a hard drive in my head, with each drive storing a different past.)

"Ughhhh. Keep thinking, thinking, thinking. You know there is no point thinking about this now you moron, focus on what is to come and be as prepared as you can be. Luckily for me, there's a silver lining at least." I shake my head as I increase my running speed.

(That lining is that the body I woke up with is not the one I remember having. I would be dead and doomed if it was. While I was no Kohta in my past life, I definitely was not as athletic as I'd prefer for a damn zombie apocalypse. This body, on the other hand, was above

average to say the least. And this last month I literally pushed it as hard as I could.

And it's paying off, I'm getting faster, my reflexes are quicker, my punches carry a good amount of force. And I can go on for quite a while without running out of breath. Physically I feel prepared...

My mentality is the real problem here...

I'm not actually a hundred percent sure what will happen when day-z arrived. If the whole thing won't happen for example, then I will be chased down by debt collectors. Or worse, if the zombie apocalypse does happen, and I get stranded all by myself in the middle of a busy street, or my dingy fucking apartment. And it's not like I can buy myself a jet or a shotgun with seven trucks of ammo. The black market here is not that easy to deal with, and being seventeen does not make it any easier. Also I'm damn broke, so there's that too...)

I let out a sigh as I keep running.

(No matter how strong I become, I cannot survive this alone. And this, leads me to what really keeps me up at night. The story followed Takashi and his team. So I 'know' only what will happen to them. That means, to have any chance to actually use the knowledge I have. I need to join Takashi's and his team.

And well, I'm gonna be honest with myself here. Takashi's a cool dude and all. But if he is going with a trio harem again, I might wind up trying to go all commander cockblock on his face. Yes, I'm salty now that I'm here. If he likes Rei so much to be depressed over it for this long, then he can keep it in his pants, thank you very much...)

I let out a small chuckle as I shake my head.

(To think poor Khota had to deal with this. Having to be the only other guy in the group where the girls swoon over Takashi, while also having a crush on Saya, who at the start of the anime shows visible interest towards Takashi...)

"Ok. I have relaxed enough. Now focus, keep jogging, running, sprinting. I will worry about Takashi and his group when I get to them. Because first I need to actually get to them... If I keep freaking myself out every time I try to think about it, I'm gonna be the first one to kick the bucket." With a small nod, I steel my self as I start a full blown sprint.

I know better than anybody after all, that soon, everybody will be running along with me.

decisions

3 days until Z-day.

The room was dimly lit, the furniture that used to decorate it gone, sold off. With the exception of a normal bed and a desk with a computer and a printer. Other than that, the room was empty.

"Maybe selling the fridge so early was not my smartest idea." I say to myself while looking at what used to be a kitchen. Both the fridge and the stove were missing and fast food packages littered the kitchen counters.

"If the landlord sees this, he is going to shoot me in the face with a rocket launcher. Thankfully, he should not return until the end of this month and the world should go to shit before then, so I'll probably get away with selling off everything in here."

While I felt like shit for stealing from the landlord, as the furniture did not belong to me. I had already decided that I would use everything I could to make sure that I was prepared for the upcoming panic.

After surveying the empty room, I turned my head back to the computer screen, the words *the thinnest part of the skull* typed in the search bar.

"Pterion... so hitting, or better yet, stabbing sideways is the best way to directly deal damage to the brain after all. Come to think of it, I wonder if the reanimated dead have a fragile skull, or Takashi and his group can swing stuff around with the force of a truck. Because, if I remember correctly, they were cracking skulls open from every direction possible. Yea, I hope it's the first one or I am o-so screwed"

Next to the computer laid several stacks of printed papers. From manuals on how to use and maintain several guns, including the ones that I know Takashi's team will find later, manuals for cleaning

blades, and 'how to' guides for silent running. Things that could help me survive a jam.

There was also a locked credit card and a small notebook on the desk.

"While I don't intend to pack anything on me, I better make sure I don't sound like a dinner bell when I have to move. After all, I intend to be the one that 'checks' Saya's theory."

I say to myself while picking up the papers that had methods on how to make your movement silent. From methods of choosing what gear to carry by running in place with whatever you aim to have on you, to using tape on the things you have in your pockets and how to stop your shoes from squeaking.

I then place the papers back on the desk and pick one of the gun manuals.

"I can also use these to get closer to Kohta. Having an acquaintance in the group can make quite the difference. Plus it would make it easier for me to explain why I could use the damn things in the first place."

After I spent some time skimming the manual, I lifted my head, only for my eyes to fall to the now useless credit card that was resting on the desk. The credit card that was given to 'me' before arriving in Japan.

"You know if the outbreak doesn't happen, I will have so much to answer for... I don't even know what happened to the past Naier before I became him."

Sick of dealing with the feeling of dissociation, I took my phone out of my pocket and glared at it. Turning the phone around I opened the back cover, removed the battery and took out the SIM card. Finally, I throw the disassembled phone inside the desk drawer.

"But, with three days left, I need a clear head to prepare for what is to come. And God knows I can't keep my mind focused if this thing keeps reminding me that this body is not my own every time it rings. I can't save everybody, hell I don't even know if I can save myself, so I can't afford any distractions."

After agreeing with myself that mopping about what 'was' and what 'is' ain't going to change a thing, I picked up the small notebook and started flipping through it. In it were schedules written with 2 different colors of black and red. The days written in black were the times I went to the shooting-range, with the red ones being days spent on self-defense lessons. Mostly armed ones, as I don't think I wanna punch a zombie in the face thank you very much.

Most of the cash I acquired from my, not so proud actions, was actually spent at the gun range, and I actually had to pass through several of them till I was able to convince one of the range owners to allow me to use the gun range. Of course, the fact that I said I would pay extra probably helped him make his decision.

"I pretty much turned the furniture into bullets if you think about it" I chuckle slightly as I keep flipping through the pages.

The rest of the cash went to food and driving lessons, as neither me, nor the old me knew how to drive.

(Was Japan's minimum legal age for driving always 18? I mean, I did have to jump through some hoops on that part too as I'm supposed to be 17...)

Normally, I would totally be lost if I were to be put behind the wheel, be it car or bike. And once again, I had to pay quite the "extra fee" just to get the teacher to agree to teach me.

(I guess with enough cash an underage person can get behind the wheel as well as behind a gun. Well, it's not like I'm going to need a license for either of those in the future, so the knowledge is all I really need. Also knowing how to drive and use a gun would probably be

helpful even if the outbreak doesn't happen. Ughh... great, now I'm thinking like a frigging fugitive.)

I also thought about buying bite-resistant underclothes too, but I would have one hell of a time trying to explain why I was wearing that stuff in school.

Same goes for bringing any weapons. Even if I could manage to find a blade that was long enough for me to not risk shoving my hand into a zombie's mouth, I could not think of a good reason as to why I had such a thing with me in the first place. Best I could do for my equipment was to gear up along with the rest, or help them gear up faster.

I looked over at the calendar on my PC screen. With only 3 days left before "all you can eat day", I decided that it was time for me to check where the school stores its sporting goods, and to make my "accidental" contact with Kohta.

But first, I'm going to go outside to get some fresh air and buy something to eat for tomorrow morning, then go to sleep. But mostly to get some air as this whole thing was making me feel sick with anxiety, i needed to move, get out of this room...

2 days until Z-day

Annoying alarm noises

The alarm on my phone goes off, signaling me that it is time to get off my ass and get ready for school. Slowly, I got up to a sitting position and shut the annoying phone down. After that, I just stared at the wall in front of me for a while.

"I sorta expected to have a nightmare again, I guess I must have gotten thick-skinned"

I look to my right seeing the desk with all the papers.

"Right... Kohta-papers-guns-meeting"

I get up from the bed and head to the bathroom to wash up. Funny as it may sound, the bathroom was the only place I decided to not touch. Nothing was missing in there.

I quickly shake off any sleepiness I had with a couple of cold water splashes to my face. With that done, I grabbed the packaged food I bought last night and started preparing for school.

(So much junk food can't be good for me...)

I head towards my desk with the bun in my mouth, picking up a stack of papers that had a Mossberg 500 Cruiser Pump Action Shotgun printed on the front page.

That should get Kohta's attention so I can strike up a conversation with him. Wish I had a stapler to keep the papers together though.

I shove the papers in my bag that was sitting next to the desk and prepare to leave. Opening the front door, I am greeted with another sunny day... The calm before the storm as they say, I turn my head back to my apartment and look inside.

"2 days left, after that it's sink or swim."

Closing the door behind me, I head off towards the school, if all goes well I will end up with a new friend today... And god knows I need some good news in my life right now...

Plans

2 days until Z-day.

(Alright, let's go over today's plan one more time.)

Right now I was standing next to the entrance of the school, looking at the building that was towering in front of me.

(My two main targets for today are, Kohta and the school's athletic equipment. I could start by looking around my class as I'm going to need a good location that I can easily reach to hide things that can cave somebody's head in. Maybe one of the unused lockers nearby? When the panic starts it will be easy to find an excuse as for why I had a weapon like a bat with me, not so much when it's a normal school day though. I will also stick with a normal baseball bat, cause you know what they say, don't fix it if it ain't broken.

Now the school definitely has baseball bats, since I remember Takashi using one in the anime, plus, I've also seen them being used in some school activities. Now, I have also seen the shed that teachers take the equipment to in order to store them. Problem is, they lock the door, so I will have to find a way to get in and 'borrow' a bat. Then get out without alerting half the school.

Going to the storage shed after the panic starts is also a big nope. It's outside of the main building and I don't wanna be stuck with the masses when they start to stampede towards the exits. So that leaves me to resort to... uhhh, lick up to today's gym teacher and help him carry the equipment back to the storage, then find a way to get rid of him so I can 'work' in peace.

Now out of the usual people teaching gymnastics, we have the cult leader of the psychopathic perverts, and Mister zombie chow #1 aka Shido and Teshima. Of course there are other teachers that assist in

P.E... but they will all be dead before the month ends and were never shown in the anime, so I didn't bother to learn who they were.)

With that thought in mind, I started making my way towards the side of the school to my left. PE classes were held there and the storage shed was also there. I had a little 'plan B' in mind, I just needed to check the storage building. If I'm lucky, I can evade the bootlicking.

After making my way through the track field next to the main building, I looked at the structure across it. It was not an impressive-looking, more like a run-down apartment really, about one and a half stories tall and made out of concrete.

After checking my surroundings to make sure I won't have any surprise visitors I walk towards the back of the shed. There was a small alley-like space here, probably 2 to 3 people could fit next to each other, between the shed and the school's cement fence-wall. I then walked into the alley checking the back of the shed for another way to enter inside. And sure enough, I found a window, wide-open and practically begging me to climb in.

"Well, guess I won't be bootlicking any teachers after all, thank god for that"

The window was a small one, probably 40 to 50 cm wide and on a height that even if I raised my arm and stretched out I could not reach it. I was about to drop my bag on the floor and jump to reach the window, when I heard the school bells ring out.

(Alright, I know how I'm getting into the shed, but I have no time left. All I need to do now is find a place to stash the 'tools' and I'm golden.)

Smiling to myself, I walk back out of the alley and head to class. On the way to my classroom, I kept an eye out for any location I could use to hide a bat... but no cigar. Other than my locker, there doesn't seem to be any easy to reach place for me to hide it. Trouble is, my locker is a bit too far for my liking.

Getting in the class and taking my seat I started thinking about my second target for today, Kohta.

(He's probably a go home club kind of guy and since he is still suppressing his anger for his 'normal life' as he calls it. He will probably still act meek. I do not know where his class is at, but there is only one main exit, the school gates. I can just wait there and 'accidentally' bump into him, dropping the papers about the shotgun in the process. I just hope that he won't get too startled, apologize and start running or something.)

While I was in my own thoughts, the teacher walked in and started the lesson. Not wanting another one on one with a teacher, I decided to pay 'attention' to the class...

So, An hour and some minutes later the bells ring out once more. It was time to get to work again.

Walking outside of the class I saw the staircase that led up to the roof.

(I could go and leave the bat on the roof, but honestly, I don't wanna be up there when Takashi and Co. gather. And while I got nothing against Rei, I don't want to deal with her self-absorbed hysteria. Plus, Takashi still likes her so I will let him have that hug. In other words, that's a no go for the roof.)

I kept moving around the hallway, but other than the occasional lockers, there was nothing else.

"Ughhh god-damn it, do I really need to put the thing in my locker?"

Putting my back against the window and giving off a sigh, I close my eyes and move my head around causing my neck bones to crackle, opening my eyes, I stare at the top of the lockers.

(The lockers are not tall enough either, putting the bat up there will still let people see it. Maybe I could just break my lock, then go to the

teacher's office and tell them that my locker won't lock or something? Ask them to give me a new one, these lockers use number combinations, so they should have a book with the combinations for all the lockers somewhere. If I can take that then I can see the combination to a locker near my class... Hmm, yeah, let's do that.)

"At least the teacher's room has air conditioning"

I started moving towards my locker as I spoke... when something clicked in my head.

(Air conditioning... Air conditioning?... air VENTS! God why did I not think of that sooner.)

I dart my head around looking for anything that might look like a vent. Until my sight stopped at a small, rectangular metal covering in the wall. The air vents in this school were on the top part of the walls, and they were rather small. Still, they're perfect to hide a bat in. I then go back to my class and spot an air vent that was not too far from my class. Probably half a class away from my classroom door.

"Perfect, I could hide the bat in there. As for the screws, I can go to the room where Kohta made his handmade gun, they definitely got screwdrivers there. And i think I will keep it too, even unsharpened, I could still use it to stab zombies in the pterion... or whatever it's called"

With quick steps I head to the second floor, looking for any classroom that has equipment for construction, like drills, hammers and nails. 10 minutes in, I came across the said room. Lucky for me, it was unlocked too.

(Why do they leave this place unlocked in the first place? Saya and Kohta also just waltzed in if I remember correctly. Well, no need to look a gift horse in the mouth, time to find me a screwdriver.)

A couple of minutes later and several fake 'I dropped my wallet here' to evade the student's attention, I come across a long, flat-nosed

screwdriver. Long enough to be used as a last-ditch effort weapon if needed. And the screwdriver's flat nose also means I could use it even if the screws were cross-shaped. Looking around to make sure nobody was looking at me, I then pocketed the screwdriver.

"yoink"

(I'm having way too much fun with this.)

I opened a hole in the inside pocket of my jacket with my new screwdriver and shoved it in its new home, then left like I just committed the heist of the century.

(Getting the bat and opening the vent while the school is teeming with kids and adults is not gonna happen. Either I sneak in during the night, or do it during club times. Meaning I got to meet with Kohta before doing any of this.)

The rest of the classes passed without anything notable happening.

After returning to class I left the screwdriver in my bag so I would not end up stabbing my guts by accident. Other than that, during the breaks I checked the shed window a couple of times to make sure it was still open. Until PE class arrived and the teacher who was to 'teach' us today was...

(Oh, is Teshima going to be teaching class today? Heh, thank God that the window is open. Means that I won't have to deal with that asshole when I'll try to get inside the shed.)

Looking around the school track, I realized that lady luck had just decided to be my best friend today, as Takashi's class also had PE right now. Meaning, Kohta was also here. I didn't know if i could use this to my advantage though. I mean, just staring at the pink-haired firecracker while she was dishing out poison to any unlucky person that blew her already short fuse made me a tad leery of approaching the other class. Takashi was not there, obviously. Rei and Hisashi were being all sweets and honey, to the point that my teeth started to

actually hurt... Anyway, time to focus on my class for now, no need to get myself in trouble with Teshima.

Thanks to all the intense physical training I was doing, PE mostly felt like a joke now. So, by the time we were done, I had barely broken a sweat, and as the students started going to the changing rooms to wash up and change, I was standing there, wondering what to do.

(If I volunteer to gather all the balls and equipment to the shed, I could hide one of the bats in a bush and take it later to avoid all the shed window infiltration business. On the other hand, dealing with Teshima is... ugh.)

While I was thinking of what to do, I looked over to the other class, realizing that everybody had already left. Also, nobody seemed to be gathering all the stuff they had used, weird.

"SERPFAFIR IF YOU GONNA STAND THERE LIKE A DORK THEN START PICKING UP THE BALLS BEFORE I PICK YOU BY THE BALLS" Teshima yelled, causing some of my classmates to burst out in laughter.

(What an ass, wait, did he just call me Serpfafir? Get my name right you god-damn gorilla, it's Sepfier... I think. I mean it is my surname since last month or so? Well, you all gonna die soon anyway, so enjoy it while you can, asswipes. Well, so much about volunteering, guess I'm going with the initial plan after all.)

After picking up the equipment my class used and dumping them in the cart, I start making my way towards the shed, Teshima leading the way.

(I need to find a way to make the douche leave, think Naier, think.)

Reaching the shed Teshima unlocks it.

"Put the balls in the ball basket and the bats on the bat racks. Come on, get on with it Sepifer I don't got all day, I'm in a hurry."

(Don't got all day huh.)

I was trying very hard not to grin. As I walked towards the big basket that was filled with balls, I then 'accidentally' stumbled, falling on the basket. Then, there was chaos. Over fifty balls flying all over the place, bouncing to their freedom. I could now also hear Teshima's screams reaching some incredible decibels. He must have said my name about four times, all four times in different ways and all four of them wrong. I was honestly going to choke from holding my breath, cause I would definitely burst out in laughter if I tried to breathe.

"YOU GOD DAMN STUPID FOREIGNER! AGHHHHH, GET THE DAMN BALLS NOW, GOD I AM NEVER GOING TO LEAVE NOW AND KYOKO IS WAITING FOR ME."

His forehead veins had all popped out. The guy was truly, really, royally pissed. I would not be surprised if he actually lunged at me.

(Okay, to convince him to leave now. He did mention Kyoko, so maybe I can use her to get him to butt out.)

"Sir, this was my fault, you can give me the keys and go if you want."

"BOY are you fucking STUPID, why would I give YOU the keys when you can't even put a goddamn ball, IN A BASKET!"

"If I lose the keys it will be my responsibility. Also sir, won't you miss your meeting with Miss Kyoko if you stay?"

Teshima just stared at me, seemingly thinking, then after about 30 seconds...

"... You lose the keys, I will see to it that you get expelled Sepafier" Teshima said, throwing the keys toward me.

"Yes, sir" I responded as Teshima walked away in a hasty pace. And now, I was alone.

"... Ppfffftttt HAHAHA." I could not hold it in any longer. I was about to fall to the floor from laughing, like I just heard the joke of the day... A couple of minutes later, after I managed to get my bearings, I got up and started putting the balls in the basket. while eyeing the bats.

"Worth it, so fucking worth it." I still had a shit-eating grin on my face while I was picking up the seemingly unending amount of balls. As This was the last class for the day, it also meant I would miss Kohta. But, well, I still got tomorrow, and I regret nothing.

After about 10 minutes in, the balls on the floor had been reduced by half. It was then, that I saw a cart coming my way.

(Humm? It must be the guy in charge of cleaning after Takashi's class. Sure took their time, it must be at least 20 minutes since I started gathering the equipment in the field, wonder why they're so late... Oh god, I hope it's not Saya, or I'm gonna be hearing about how stupid I am for the next five minutes once she realizes I knocked the ball basket down. Then again, most people would be thinking that so, ughhh... guess I'm hosed.)

Once the cart got near, I could not actually believe my eyes. The one behind it was Kohta, seemingly looking down in the dumps.

(Holy shit, my luck today is off the charts. Now, all I need to do is make a good first impression, see if I can get him to hang out with me.)

After looking at the chubby guy for a bit, I walked out of the shed and called out to him.

"Hey there bro, bit late for the party, but come in, we got balls"

Kohta finally takes his eyes off his hands that are on the handle and looks at me.

"Huh, what... what do you mean?" he asked.

"Ehh, I kinda knocked over the basket with the balls and sent em all flying all over the place." I say while putting my hand on my hip and turning my torso to gesture into the shed behind me.

"Ohh." Kohta then looks behind me, seeing the remaining balls that were still on the ground.

"Still, had you arrived 10 minutes earlier, you would have had the joy of seeing Teshima sing opera, Viking helmet and all" I start chuckling from my own little joke after finishing.

"So, why are you so late anyway, if I didn't have my little 'accident' you would have been locked outside the shed."

"I uhhhh, I was... " His eyes darted left and right for a few seconds before looking back down to his hands.

(Huh? What sort of reaction is that? Was he stuck in the bathroom or something? Or... if I remembered correctly, Kohta mentioned in the manga that he got bullied by his class, so there's a chance they dumped cleaning duty on him so they could leave early.)

"They dumped you with cleaning duty?" I asked him with a straight face as I folded my arms.

"Uhh well, they... uh they didn't do that... I just."

(Yep, definitely got dumped with the job. Well, this can be my chance to get close to him. I got a good feeling about this, so time to put my plan into motion.)

"Heh, relax, if people did dump it to you, then they don't deserve your restraint, they deserve a twelve gauge in the kneecap from a KSG."

While I did do my research about guns, and quite a lot at that. I did not really know how rare, or exotic each gun was. So I just picked

one that I remember having a good reputation with a fancy-sounding name and used it as an icebreaker.

Kohta looked at me for a bit, then looked back towards the shed.

"Actually, a shot from a 45 caliber gun would be better. It would not sever the leg like a shot from the KSG, but instead only break the kneecap, and most importantly not kill. A broken kneecap would cause the one you shot to survive, but they would feel an intense amount of pain. So much so that they would probably pass out. After that, they would probably need intensive medical care, which might still not be enough to actually completely save the leg as the shot could have damaged the kneecap beyond repair, causing permanent disability. A 1911 or a P227 should be more than enough to get the job done."

(... While I knew that Kohta was a gun nut, seeing it up close, is pretty amazing)

"I'm sorry, " After finishing his rant, he suddenly turns his head back down. Probably thinking that my silence meant that I disapproved of his comment.

"That. Was pretty amazing." I raise my eyebrow as I speak.

Kohta lifts his head and looks at me with a slack-jawed expression.

"You went from saying two words per five minutes to telling me an essay in less than ten seconds. Marked me impressed. I take it, you like guns?"

"Mhm yeah" he nods at me.

(Well I didn't expect him to go all starry-eyed and start talking like a maniac. But honestly, his second reaction is a bit more lackluster than I expected...)

"Well, while I enjoyed our little chat, I still gotta gather them balls over there" I point my thumb behind me.

"Ohh yes, of course." Kohta then looks back to his cart.

"Well the shed is kind of a mess right now, but you can probably put your cart in the back somewhere, as I have cleaned that spot at least. " I remarked to Kohta as I started going back into the shed, picking up the balls and putting them back in the basket.

"Hmm, ok i will do that" Kohta pushes the cart into the shed and starts unloading the equipment from it and into their respective places.

"Say, have you ever shot a gun?" I turned my head to him as I left the ball I was holding in the basket.

(I know that he had already gone off to the USA and trained with that contractor, but I just had a very crazy idea, and I liked that crazy idea.)

"Ah, yes, yes I have, I have practiced with multiple weapons actually" Kohta didn't stop unloading the cart while speaking.

"Interesting, tell you what. I know we just met like what, five to ten minutes ago? But you seem to be a cool guy and the only reason you ended up here is because some retards forced their work on you. So, how about I help you turn the day around?"

"No, it's ok I don't really mind..."

"Oh ok, I was going to head to the gun range after this, seeing how you like guns so much, I figured you would like to come along, but if you have other stuff to do I get it" I cut him off, trying to hold off my grin.

It must have taken less than a second before I heard the sound of something hitting the floor. I then turn my head around towards the

noise and see that Kohta has dropped a wooden bat, seemingly frozen and staring at me.

"The... the gun range? But you're not 18 yet, you can't go there" Kohta's eyes were wide open as he spoke. I just smiled, putting the last ball back into the basket.

"Well normally yes, but let's just say that I made the gun range owner make an... exception, don't worry, no violence, blackmailing or anything unsavory" I say, raising my hands up.

"So, you in? Or am I going by myself?"

Kohta's eyes were practically glowing now...

(Now I know he wants to come. He is probably just trying to be cautious as... well he just met me what, 30 minutes ago? I just hope tha...)

"YES, I MEAN NO, I MEAN I'M COMING TOO!" He shouts before I could even finish thinking.

(Aaand, I probably just turned this into the most exciting day of the month for him, at least until the zombies decide to come knocking and he finally gets to let loose.)

"Alright, once we're done we'll go, I gotta return the keys to 'sir opera singer' first though. Wait for me outside the school gates. After that, we go ahead to the gun range"

"O... OK!" Kohta then just darted out of the shed.

(I don't think I ever saw him run that fast... He also forgot to put all his stuff from the cart back to the baskets. Oh well, I guess I will finish it for him. Also, With Kohta gone, I can go ahead with stea... I mean 'borrowing' a bat.)

I then grab a couple of bats and test them out, until finding one that seemed to be in top condition. I take it, and lock the shed behind me.

(As long as they don't decide to do an inventory count on the gym equipment tomorrow, nobody will realize this one is missing. Now all I need to do is figure out how I'll get this to the vent next to my class.)

I turn to look at the school from where I'm standing, silhouettes walking in the hallways.

(No good, there's no way I can take this bat up there undetected while also dealing with the screws on the vent. Guess I'll be coming to school again after it's dark. This is just a normal school after all, it shouldn't have too many guards, and the guards themselves might just be teachers.)

I nod to myself and hide the bat in a nearby bush, then head towards the school staff room in order to give Teshima back his keys.

After arriving at the staff room and giving the keys to the first teacher I saw, saying that they are for Teshima, I head to my class and take my stuff. I actually also waited for a bit in order to see whether I could just unscrew the vent now to save time. But it couldn't be done, a random teacher or student would occasionally pass, not giving me enough time to take a chair and climb up to unscrew the thing. So I just left it as is and went to meet with Kohta.

Upon reaching the school's front door, I saw Kohta waiting with his arms folded by the school gate, looking at the floor and occasionally towards the school's front door.

(Jeez, you don't have to look 'this' lost in space Kohta.)

I then walked out the front door and headed towards him. Once he raised his head again, I lifted my arm up to about head high to make him notice me, after I was close enough for him to see of course. No need to make a fool out of myself now.

"Hey there commando, ready to go shoot some guns?" I say to the guy while he starts smirking.

"Always, oh by the way, my name is Kohta Hirano" He responds.

"Naier Sepfier, well then Hirano let's get going. Oh and, you can call me Naier, my surname's kind of a mouthful." I say as I fold my arms.

"Alright, you can call me Kohta then." After Kohta finishes speaking, I extend my arm to him for a western-style handshake, which he returns.

"Well then Kohta, let's get going, we're walking there" I add as i nod.

"Ehhh, must we? I kind of... hate walking" Kohta then responds with one of his ever first lines from the anime, or well, the fact that he hates walking.

"Yep. Just think of the guns Kohta, oh and check this out " I say as I take off my bag, open it, and show Kohta the print outs that I had originally planned to use as bait.

"That's the manual for the Mossberg 500 Cruiser Pump Action Shotgun." Kohta says while looking at the picture of the shotgun on the first paper.

"Yeah I'm gonna be trying to shoot something like that today, or at least one of its versions. Check it out while we head there and tell me if there's something extra I should know about." I say while handing the manual to Kohta.

"Sure thing" That was all he said before becoming engrossed with reading the gun manual.

(I should make sure he doesn't get run over by a car or something...)

Guns guns guns

2 days until Z-Day.

(I am having this weird feeling right now. The feeling you get when you see something that ought to be impossible, happening. Like seeing a person you never thought you'd see in your life or even a giant flying mecha that gives Newton the finger.

While I still get goosebumps every time I see somebody from the main 'cast' while in school, having Kohta walking next to me makes the sensation go to a totally different level. He's a character I always thought I would only ever see behind a screen, yet here he is walking next to me. I just hope that when I'll have to interact with the rest of the group it won't feel so weird.)

"Hey Naier, are we there yet?" Kohta asked while dragging his feet.

We must have walked a good thirty minutes since leaving school.

"Almost, about five to ten minutes or so." I say to Kohta while thinking about the gun range.

(The building is soundproof, so it could make for a good base post outbreak. As it would mask any sounds a survivor is going to make from the inside, but there's one problem. It is a shooting-range/gun shop, so everybody and my grandma will go there to get a gun. Meaning, it will be flooded with survivors before long, so there is a good chance this place will be either overrun, or house other survivors. That makes the place too unreliable to be placed in my priority list.)

"Hey Naier... are we really going to... you know, shoot any guns?" Kohta turns his head to me.

"Hmm, if you think that I might be lying then why did you come along with me in the first place? As for your question, yes we are going to

have some target practice, don't worry." I say to Khota making a thumbs up gesture with my hand.

"Oh, s-sorry I didn't mean like that. It's just, you are being awfully kind, it's a little weird for me. Sorry." Kohta was now looking at the ground again, hands in his pockets.

"Don't worry bub, I have no intention of lying to you. But, words are just words after all, so the best way to prove my word is for you just see it for yourself. So, speaking of our future activity, are you a good shot?"

"ehh... I'm ok." Kohta said while scratching the side of his head.

(Ok, my ass. If you are half as good as what the anime portrayed you to be, you are either undermining yourself, or trying to catch me off guard.)

"Right... I'll keep that in mind. By the way, we're here." I turn my head around and point at a rather small corner building.

The building itself was plain, no signs or flashy big letters with the exception of a large window that took about half of the storefront. On the other side of the window were different types of crossbows and air rifles. Kohta eyed the display for a little, then opened his mouth to speak while I was looking at my phone.

"This is a..."

"Good time to take a break" I interrupt Kohta before he can go on a derailing gun rant again.

"We've arrived a bit faster than I expected. The gun range won't be open for the next fifteen minutes, so we have to wait for a bit. Anything you want to do till then?" I look back at the chubby boy while putting the phone back in my pocket.

"We can go inside and check the guns out, I bet they hid the better stuff inside." Kohta said as he was about to walk inside.

"We are not going inside yet, come on, let's go wait on a bench for now." I turn around and start walking away with Kohta following behind me, occasionally turning his head towards the storefront.

"But... but... the guns."

I sat on a nearby bench with Kohta following suit, he looked rather... sad. Then again this guy is addicted to guns and I just denied him his fix soooo, yeah.

"So how did you learn so much about guns anyway? I mean I like guns as much as the next guy, but you blow me out of the water with your knowledge on the things, at least that's the impression I got with that impressive rant of yours." I folded my arms and leaned back on the bench.

"... Well, I read about guns a lot. I also had a... friend that knew a lot about guns. He taught me for a while, he was also the reason I managed to shoot some as well"

(Friend? I'm pretty sure he never mentioned that he had friends in Blackwater USA when he said that to the group, or did he? Though I suppose he doesn't want to stick out too much by saying that he had training by a private military company in the US.)

"I see, well I hope he taught you well enough, you'll need it."

"I will?" Kohta was scratching his cheek, with a curious look in his face.

"You'll see what I mean soon enough don't worry about it." Turning my away from Kohta I started thinking about my plan for tonight.

(Once the sun is down I'll have to 'visit' the school, thankfully all my clothes are either black or... dark gray? So it should let me blend in

with the shadows. I suppose that the guards will be holding flashlights so I should be able to spot them faster than they can spot me.

As for telling Kohta that he will need to shoot 'good' soon, that was actually with double meaning. Sure, one is for when the shit hits the fan. But the second one is actually for right now. If the owner sees Kohta shoot, and he is as good as he should be, he will be interested in a match, or I hope he will be.

The owner is a foreigner like me. Maybe it's also one of the reasons he accepted my offer in the first place, the other being that the paycheck itself was rather fat. Now, so far he kept his word and for one hour he'd let me use or check the guns out in the range, along with some boxes of ammo to use. All of that after closing time so other people won't see me. As that would only cause trouble both for me and him. He probably won't be too happy with Kohta being here today though. I could tell him I'll pay extra? Although that would be a lie as I don't have any more cash to spend, and he would want the cash right there and then.)

After ten silent minutes, I get up, gesturing for Kohta to follow me.

Arriving outside of the store I motion Kohta to wait and head into the store myself.

"Hey kid, last day you come here, as per our agreement" The owner glanced at me while he was fiddling with the register. He was of average height with a buzz cut haircut. His gray cargo pants covering his boots and a plain white T-shirt on his torso.

"Indeed it is, but before we go on I got to ask you something" The owner hearing my request folds his arms and cocks his head to the side, gesturing for me to continue on.

"I have a guy with me that might be a better shot than you, interested in checking him out?" The owner instantly smirks a little at my statement.

"Ohhhh a better shot than me you say. Kid, I shoot here daily. Can I even take this 'offer' seriously?"

"Well how about this, you check him out right now, if he is good enough to prove a challenge, then you let us stay. If he turns out to be a fluke, I leave now and you can close the store early and go home, you already have the payment for today so you don't really lose anything."

The owner thinks for a bit putting his finger on his temple

"Very well kid, I'll bite. Bring the guy at the gun range downstairs and then get ready to go home early." The owner turns around and walks towards the underground range laughing at his own 'amazing' joke.

I walk back out to find Kohta twiddling his thumbs.

(If I didn't know better, I would begin to panic right about... now.)

"Well bud come on, it's time to sink or swim." I motion for Kohta with my hand to enter the store.

The moment he entered his eyes started shining, his head darting left and right like an excited puppy to all the guns on the displays. While Kohta was busy with that, I was changing the door's front sign from open to closed and locking the door with the key that was on the knob.

"THAT... THAT'S THE REMINGTON 870." Kohta shouted before he ran to the other side of the store.

"AND THIS... YES THE BENELLI NOVA... THEY EVEN HAVE SOME WINCHESTER 1300 AND, AND, AND."

Before Kohta could blow up like a hype bomb I started moving towards him.

"You can stay here and drool over the hunting shotguns if you want, I'm going downstairs to see some real guns."

I guess the word 'real' struck home as Kohta snapped out of his gun fugue and quickly followed me.

Heading downstairs we reached a glass door with the gun range on the other side. It was not too large, with stands for 5 people, and a range long enough to effectively be a challenge if the targets were in the farthest part of it. Next to the range was a small room with a desk and some chairs along with a small tv for spectators and a locked door on the back of said room leading to the range's armory.

I walked through the glass door and the owner turned to see me, his face slowly turning to a frown.

"Is this your idea of a joke kid? You told me you found a GUY, he's a god-damn school kid for god's sake!" His eyes narrowed as he stared at me.

"And my offer still stands, let him take one shot, if he's not good enough we leave. You save ammo and you can go home early." I respond as I fold my arms.

(I hope he takes the offer, since he has all the right to refuse the challenge and just send us all home. But, I was hoping that he would at least give me this much as it was my last day here anyway.)

"Ughhhh... one shot kid, no more. If this turns out to be a joke, you two will leave immediately." He puts his hand on his forehead while covering his eyes, exasperated.

"So Kohta you up for it? If you want to shoot more than once you just have to..." I didn't manage to even finish my sentence as Kohta had moved past me.

(Ohh boy is Kohta in spec ops mode because the owner said he can actually shoot?)

"Show me what I'm going to use and what I'm shooting."

(Yep he's gone full commando, and not the no pants type one.)

The owner snickered a bit and moved to the range with Kohta following behind him, his eyes slowly widening when he saw the gun that he was supposed to use.

"This is a Remington Model 700, personally customized by me. You got one shot chubby, farthest target, surprise me." After handing Kohta with the gun, the owner walked back to me with a shit-eating grin on his face, we then headed towards the chairs in the spectator room.

"Well kid it was fun working with ya, but you should learn not to make bets with things you don't understand." He then puts his hands on the back on his head with the grin still on his face, waiting for Kohta to take his shot.

"This is a Vortex Optics Viper PST with a custom stock and a custom body made out of carbon and fiberglass. I need to calibrate the scope to make sure my shot will find its mark, the stand here does not have any bipods to place the gun while I aim. So, I will have to crouch down and use the stand itself."

Kohta was mumbling to himself as he moved himself into a crouching position while fiddling with the scope... that mumbling though, seemed to have caught the owner's attention, as he was now staring at Kohta, his smirk slowly disappearing.

"That kid, he knows what he's doing, he has used a gun before?" The owner asked. Judging from his expression, I'd say he was starting to take the bet seriously now.

"Yes. I did tell you that he's a good shot. Did you forget? Now, it was my turn to grin.

"I'm ready." Kohta, now in a crouched position, turned to look at us with his hand in the air in a thumbs up motion.

The owner nodded and Kohta lowered his hand, placing his finger over the trigger. He looked through the scope once more, and a couple of seconds later, he pulled the trigger.

The owner's eyes went wide as he looked at the screen.

"Bullseye on his first try... " He then got up from his seat and walked towards Kohta.

"Not bad chubby, guess your friend was right to trust you. It's a challenge then" The owner then turns to me.

"Ok kid, he can stay. We'll have that match." He nods as he looks at me, then turns his head back to Kohta.

"Well, let's see what you really got chubby."

The owner takes the gun from Kohta and heads towards the locked room, unlocks it and goes inside closing the door behind him and locking it back again.

I get up and walk up to Kohta, who had left the stand and was walking towards me.

"Good job." I slap Kohta on the shoulder lightly.

"Ehehe, thanks... Man I can't wait." Kohta then took a seat and looked at the screen.

"Well, now I can officially say that I have kept my word, no?" I lift one eyebrow while looking at Kohta.

He turns his head back to me, smiling.

"Yea and right now I'm very glad I actually came along, thanks Naier."

"Don't mention it."

The sound of the back door unlocking caused both of us to turn our heads. The owner walked out of the locked room with three unmodified Remington 700 with him and three small bags of ammo.

"Alright kids take your positions, I'm going to wipe the floor with ya." He hands both of us a gun and an ammo pouch and then goes back to lock the door while we head to the range and get ready.

"This match will be for as long as you are here, meaning it will last for forty-five minutes. We will have a five-minute break every fifteen minutes to check scores and restock if we run out of ammo." With that, the owner picks his gun and points at the target with it.

"We will be aiming at the furthest targets on the other side of the wall, bullseye will be a hundred points, each circle around it will be twenty points less the farther it is from the bullseye. So 80 for the nearest, 60 for the one after and so on and so forth. The gun holds 4 rounds, three in the magazine and 1 in the chamber. We'll each have 50 rounds to use, I'll be surprised if you manage to use it all though. Get ready we start on three"

After taking some ammo from the bag and placing them in easy reach all of us took our guns and took aim. The owner was standing upright, Kohta was using his previous position and I used my elbows to balance the gun on the stand putting my cheek on the stock.

"THREE, TWO, ONE"

"FIRE"

Sounds of gunshots echoed in the soundproof room. I had no idea how I was doing since the target was rather small from this distance, but I got to admit. I was having fun.

15 MINUTES LATER

"Time up, guns down!" Shouts the owner.

After the first round was over we left the guns and headed to the spectator room to see the targets and checked our shots.

Owner : 4 Bullseye, 14 second circles, 12 third circles, 7 fourth circles, 0 on the fifth circle to a total of 2540.

Kohta : 13 Bullseye, 20 second circles, 0 third circles, 0 fourth circles, 0 on the fifth circle to a total of 2900.

Me : 11 Bullseye, 6 second circles, 2 third circles, 0 fourth circles, 0 on the fifth to a total of 1700.

I looked at Kohta, who had a wide grin on his face.

The owner was actually smiling as well.

(I guess he did find the challenge fun, huh.)

"Kid, you're falling behind, chubby here is leaving you in the dust." He snickered as he turned to face me, I laughed a little through my teeth.

"Tell me that when you're winning, you're still in second place."

The owner heads back to the locked room with hasty steps and comes back with another bag full of ammo.

"Refill your ammo pouch with this, after that we go for the second round" The owner hands us the bag.

I took the bag first as I was the farthest away, then gave it to Kohta who then gave it back to the owner who, after refilling his pouch, headed back to the door and left the bag inside.

"Alright ladies on your posts we start on... three, two, one, fire!" The owner shouted the count down once more and the guns lit up again.

(Honestly, I do not expect to do any better now, getting bullseyes means that my aim is good enough to hit a dead man in the head

from a good enough distance. That's what I need right now.)

Keeping my eyes on the target I continue to take shots, reloading the gun after every time it empties.

15MINUTES LATER

"Time's up, guns down!" Shouts the owner once more.

Kohta and the owner quickly walk back to the room to check their scores with me following behind them.

OWNER : 9 Bullseye, 17 second circles, 4 third circles, 6 fourth circles, 0 on the fifth circle to a total of 5280 with the last round's score added.

Kohta : 16 Bullseye, 14 second circles, 0 third circles, 0 fourth circles, 0 on the fifth circle to a total of 5620 with the last round's score added.

Me : 13 Bullseye, 9 second circles, 1 third circle, 0 fourth circles, 0 on the fifth to a total of 3780 with the last round's score added.

"Well chubby, looks like you were worth the challenge, you actually won. We have five minutes left but I don't think I can pass over you now." The owner was smiling while looking at the screen.

"And kid, what did I tell ya about being too slow, you fell way behind. Your score is just sad" He turns to me folding his arms, still smiling.

"Well if I could be as good as the pros with so little training it would be cheating no?" I lift my hands up in a surrendering gesture.

"Huh whatever, I did not expect us to make so much of a mess so I will have to ask for you two to leave now, I'll have to clean this place. Take it as your friend's prize that I'm not making you gather the cases. Now shoo get outta here."

The owner points at the door with his finger.

We both nod and start heading towards the glass door, after Kohta is heading up the stairs I turn around and speak up.

"We can't lock the door from the outside so you might want to come and lock it." The owner stared at me for a bit.

"Yeah, you're right. Just go up I'll be there to lock the front door in a bit" He leaves the bag he had on his hands and looks at me.

"Very well. Also thanks for taking up my offer, both now and when we first met." I say to the owner while nodding.

"The paycheck was good, now get out of here kid. I have to close shop." He points his finger once more towards the stairs behind me.

"Gehh, way to ruin the moment, sir-ass-sir" I turned around, laughing while walking up the stairs. I think I heard the owner laugh too?

Heading back to the front of the store I looked at Kohta who was drooling over the shotguns again.

"You just can't have enough, can you" I say to Kohta while moving to the door, unlocking it.

"Nope." He starts moving towards the door as well, his head still turned to the shotguns.

After we both exited the gun range, I took a deep breath and started walking. Motioning Kohta to move along.

"He told me he will be up in a bit to lock the door, so we can just leave." I turned to look at Kohta.

"So had any fun?" I ask.

"You kidding, that was amazing. Most fun I had in ages." Kohta says happily while he clapped his hands together.

"You know. If you are coming here again... could you, you know... let me join again?" He asks as he turns to look at the floor.

"Sure thing." I answer.

(Sure thing... sure thing. Wish I could do such a thing but in two days we'll be running for our lives. Well... at least the 'shooting guns' part is going to happen again i guess.)

We continue walking for a couple of minutes till we reach an intersection.

Kohta then stops and looks at me.

"Well, I'll be going this way. My house is over that direction so I guess we'll split up here" Kohta points at a road to my right that climbed up a hill.

"Alright Kohta, take care." I held out my arm. After he looks at it for a few seconds he smiles and grabs it for a handshake.

"By the way Naier, the owner of the store... what's his name?" Kohta asks as he lets go of my arm.

"Oh, I... got no idea, he never told me" I raise my arms and shrug.

"Really, he lets you use the gun range, yet he didn't tell you his name?" Kohta tilts his head in confusion.

"He doesn't know mine either. We had an agreement but that didn't make us buddies." I lowered my arms down and looked back at the gun range.

(I still wish him the best of luck for what is to come though. Even if he did take all my frigging money.)

"Anyway I should get going too, it's getting a bit late. The sun won't be out for a couple of hours but I still haven't even opened a book to

study today" I say to Kohta, which causes him to react in the expected fashion.

"CRAP YOU'RE RIGHT, HOMEWORK!" He screams as I nod at him. I turn around and start walking down the road, as I hear running footsteps behind that slowly started to fade away.

(Wonder how long he will be able to run up this hill... Well whatever, I got my own 'homework' to do as well.)

Night raid

2 Days before Z-day, Night.

A couple of hours have passed since I left Kohta and returned to my apartment, and the sun was out. Meaning, it was time to put plan two into motion.

I was sitting by my desk, with the computer playing a random song. On the desk, the equipment I was going to use for my 'visit' at the school.

"Screwdriver, two belts to wrap the bat around my leg so I don't have to carry it on hand, a half-face mask, gloves and a flashlight. I'll only use the flashlight in case of an emergency though, as it will be a dead give away that there's a person sneaking about."

I got up from the desk and went to the wardrobe taking out a black jacket with an attached hood.

(If this jacket was leather it would look way cooler, but ehh too noisy. My shirt and pants are already black so no need to change them. Wearing army type boots would look cool as well but the soles on them are too hard, my steps will echo from miles away. So I'll stick with the field hunting boots I have as they have softer soles.

Now the guards in the school are probably actual guards and not teachers, don't think guarding the school is on their payroll. Well, maybe they would be if the school was cheap, but it's not, so I better go expecting actual guards. Although, it would be fun to meet Shido in a dark corner... but that scum would never volunteer for guard duty even if there was one.

Now getting in the school grounds will be easy enough, just jump over the fence. Getting in the school building itself, will be more tricky. The doors and windows will probably be locked, so I got to

think of another way to get in. For that, I have three possible plans in my head at the moment.

The first is, waiting until a guard unlocks a door and then somehow managing to get in with him.

The second is, checking the nurse office window, betting on Shizuka's clumsiness that she might have left the window unlocked and nobody locked it after her.

The third plan is, to climb to the first floor via the bridge-like structure that links the school buildings together, although there is a chance that the doors there will be locked as well.

Now, I shouldn't go there too soon, the longer the guards do their shift, the bigger the likelihood of them loosening up and making a mistake. There's a reason the saying 'we attack at dawn' exists.)

I decided to take a small break from overthinking my plan and went outside to get something to eat. With the slight hope that some bright idea might come to me while I'm taking a stroll...

Taking my keys from the desk I leave my apartment complex and head to the nearest convenience store

"It's funny if you think about it, after the outbreak I might start eating better..."

Reaching the store, I got in and bought the most expensive bread the store had to sell.

"I don't think I'll be able to eat tomorrow after the sun will be out, so here's to my last nightly meal me. Don't choke on it." I whisper to myself as I exit the store.

In the end, I returned to my apartment without any great new mind-boggling ideas, so, I started getting ready for my little infiltration... After putting the black jacket on, I shoved the gloves, half mask,

extra belts and flashlight in my pant's pockets. No need to get myself arrested for looking like the stereotypical burglar after all. I then sat on the chair to put on the boots. Looking at my computer screen, I noticed the date and time.

1 Day before Z-day.

"Midnight, the last day with no brain munching corpses has begun... Anyway, got to focus on the task at hand... It is going to take me a good thirty minutes to get to the school, so if I leave now I can go and spend some time checking out how the patrols work, or if lady luck will bless me again, find an open window."

I get up from my chair, take the screwdriver and conceal it in my sleeve, then grab the keys and head out.

Before leaving my apartment, I decided to leave my keys under the front mat.

"Too noisy to take them with me, so just in case, better leave them here."

I nod and start making my way towards the school at a slow pace.

(It's not cold out tonight, that's good. I don't want to freeze my ass over while I'm scoping out the school.)

Walking down the dark silent road I start thinking about tomorrow.

(I wonder whether I should try to make contact with Saeko or Saya tomorrow... Because, I got to admit. In the anime, I liked those two the most. Still, even thinking about interacting with them makes me kinda nervous... Huh, no point in thinking about it. I'll worry about it once the sun is up, got to focus on breaking into the school right now.)

While heading towards the school I thought about all the parkour practice I have done and the videos I've seen. Along with all the

methods I read up on silent running and muffling movement, I shouldn't have any real trouble avoiding the walking dead.

(Knowing how to vault over a fence or climbing a tall wall will be very helpful, both now and for what is to come. A lot of my physical training was actually leaning towards learning how to do that, rather than building up muscle mass so I could swing things around like a gorilla. As being able to swing efficiently and have more 'escape routes' is far more important than being able to swing around rebar. I just hope that I won't end up face flat on the floor when it counts, don't think I'll be able to muffle 'that' sound.)

Because of my slow walking pace, getting to school actually took almost an hour.

After finally arriving at the front gate, I check the other side, but see nothing. I then move to the front gate doors and give it a push.

(Locked, obviously.)

I then start walking around the school, following the fence while looking for anything that could be used as a blind spot so I don't end up looking like a flag when I'll vault over.

After looking for a while and finding no obvious blind spot, I decided to just jump inside from around the location of the school's equipment shed.

After making my way to the back of the school where the shed was located I take out and wear the gloves and half mask then pull up the jacket's hood.

(Time to go ninja mode.)

I toss the screwdriver to the other side through the gap of the metal bars and grab the top of the fence, jumping and pulling myself up until the top of the wall is at my hips, then hold this position as I try to figure out how to get over the fence without slamming the ground.

(If I vault over I'll end up landing noisily on the other side. Can't do that, I need to get used to being as silent as possible when I'm not in a hurry. So I should just pass my legs over and lower myself.)

And so, I passed my legs over the fence, spinning myself in the process, and with a last look at the streets outside, I lowered my body until my feet touched the ground. Then, I went to a crouching position.

I grabbed the screwdriver and ran behind the shed and looked over at the track, and then across the track at the school's windows, making sure that there weren't any spectators.

(Now the real boss battle begins, first I need to check the bushes to see if my bat is still there. No point doing anything else if the first step is already a bust.)

Still crouching, I moved towards the bushes near the shed. After reaching them, I looked around at where I had hidden the bat earlier.

(Good, it's still here.)

I picked up the bat, took out the two belts from my pocket and used them to wrap the bat on my thigh. Afterward, I headed near the school's wall in order to walk alongside it, so I won't be visible to any guards that were inside the building. Like that, I start heading towards the main entrance.

(No guards so far, hope they don't appear on my face all at once.)

Before reaching the front entrance of the school I move away from the wall at a location with no windows over me, and head towards the nearby trees.

(Got to thank whoever thought that this school needed so many bushes and trees. Half the school is surrounded by greenery. Still no sight of any guards though.)

With the cover of the vegetation, I move to the front entrance of the school and lie down near a bunch of bushes. With my cover making sure that I wouldn't be seen by any passing guards, I started scoping the front entrance of the school and the hallway where my target, the vent, is located at.

(Alright, now I have to wait for a bit, I got to see if any guards pass over the hallway and if any of them will exit the front door or... Well, now that I think about it, if this place has any guards at all.)

And... Twenty minutes passed in total silence... No patrols, no flashlights, no nothing. So, I got up and started moving towards the door. After reaching it, I gave it an experimental push.

(Locked, if the place is really empty then breaking a window is the only way. I'll do that as a last resort though. Even if I'm about seventy percent sure that there are no guards around, better be safe than sorry.)

Screwdriver in hand I start moving towards the nurse office.

After some minutes I reach my target location and check the window, only to find it locked as well.

(Locked. Out of all the things you had to be punctual with Shizuka, this had to be one of them... Well, back of the school and broken window it is then.)

As I start making my way towards the back of the school I spot a flash of light over the corner.

(Holy Shit!)

I dart my head around looking for any possible cover, spotting another patch of greenery. I move away from the window and silently run behind a tree then go to a prone position so I can hide behind the bushes.

The light turns over the corner and illuminates where I was a second ago, slowly making its way across. I also got a good look at the guard while he was passing by. He was a short chubby guy, and while I couldn't make out his facial expression from here, from the way he was dragging his feet, he didn't look very excited to be here.

I decided to follow behind the guard while still staying behind cover. Until we were near the front entrance again, there I saw another flashlight illuminating the dark field.

(A second guard, are they going to change shifts? I'll have to watch them from a distance, being too close while both of them are there could end horribly for me.)

I stopped tailing the guard and took a wider approach. After picking up enough distance to feel comfortable with, I lay down on a sloped hill, to use as cover as I checked on the guards.

From this distance I couldn't make out the second guard's appearance very well other than that he looked average. After the two guards met up and spoke for a bit, the second guard then handed the first one something and started going in the opposite direction from which the second guard arrived from. The first guard then walked to the front door pushed it open and after closing it, he locked it from the inside.

(It seems that there are at least two patrol routes, one inside the school itself and another on the outside perimeter. After finishing their round, the two guards then meet in the front entrance and switch routes, and from I can see, switch keys.)

(Hmm, wait, the door wasn't locked when he went inside... If they don't lock the door while they wait to change routes I could sneak in then. Hmm, there's a slope to my left that continues up to the left side of the building's entrance, and then some. There's also a staircase passing through that slope, for people that want to head on towards the field to my left, that's also the route the second guard

actually took. So, I can just go there, then head straight and hide next to the wall of the main building, until the guard exits.)

Putting my plan into action, I walked stealthily to the slope to my left before sitting tight in my new hiding spot. Waiting for the second guard to come to a full circle while also checking for any signs of the first guard passing through the hallway I'll have to be at. After the second guard made a total of two rounds, I saw light coming from the targeted hallway.

(The second guard is making his rounds faster. It has only been twenty minutes, and he is on his second lap. The first guard on the other hand took about twenty minutes to do one lap as I didn't see him when I was waiting here before.)

Five minutes later, A light came out of the main hallway. The first guard strolled up to the front door, unlocked it and headed outside. He then sat on the bench near me, his back turned to the slope. After that he took out his phone, plugging his ears with what seemed to be earbuds.

(I was going to wait until it was his turn to be inside the building again, but this is just too good to pass up.)

I silently got up and started walking straight. Once I closed in to the bench that the guard was sitting on I slowed down and walked past the guard while he was too busy singing along to something I couldn't really understand. Yeah, that's how bad his singing was.

After I passed by the guard I kept looking back every few steps until I reached the wall. What was next was the ten most slow seconds in my life, up until now at least... I made my way to the door while walking sideways, my eyes drilling holes into the guard's head.

(if he raises his head and looks left, I'm toast.)

After reaching the door I opened it and moved backward with my full attention on the guard. Once I was through the door I slowly closed

it, all the while making sure that the bat would not accidentally hit anything. The moment the door closed I took a few more steps backward until I could turn around the corner. With the guard out of sight, I turned and walked down the hall to my right, in the direction the guards use when they start their round. With that hurdle out of the way, I started thinking about the vent, especially on how to reach it.

(Usually, there is a chair under the staircase in this hall, probably used by the janitor when he or she is on a break. I'll use that to reach the vent.)

Getting to the staircase, I find no chair, only a broom and a mop along with a bucket.

(Damn it, no chair. But, hmmm, that bucket should be able to give me enough height to at least unscrew the bolts. I just hope it's going to hold my weight.)

I picked up the bucket, making sure it had no water in it, and headed up the stairs. After going to the second floor I started moving faster while keeping my eyes on the entrance downstairs. The guard was still there, sitting on the bench. In other words, the other guard was not there yet. After a couple of minutes of light jogging, I made my way to the vent near my classroom. I took one final look outside to see the guard still sitting there.

(Good I got some time.)

I take the bucket and turn it around then place it on the ground. Afterward, I carefully place my foot on it, trying not to put my weight on the center of the bucket. After a few checks with my foot, making sure that it wouldn't collapse under my weight, I stood up on top of the bucket, the vent now within my arm's reach. So Screwdriver in hand, I start unscrewing the vent's bolts. After taking off the two lower bolts and pocketing them, I unscrew one of the top bolts and then slightly unscrew the fourth, letting the vent come undone, but still hanging on the last bolt.

I then undo the top belt on my leg and take the bat off of my leg to put it inside the vent. I slowly placed the bat, first to limit any noise it might make touching the metal vent. Second, to actually make sure there's enough room for the bat, as it was too dark to actually see inside the vent.

(It would be funny if I did all this only for the vent to end up being shorter in length than the bat. Or worse, if the vent went down vertically and the bat fell in...)

Luckily, no such calamity happened and I was able to put the whole bat inside the vent. So with the bat safely hidden inside the vent now, I placed the vent cover back in its place. I then started to screw in the vent cover. Only to realize halfway through that I really don't want to be busy unscrewing a vent on Z-day. With that in mind I screwed in only one bolt, the one horizontally across the partially unscrewed one, after leaving the two extra bolts inside the vent. That way the vent looked normal, while I could also easily unscrew it on Z-day.

(This should hold it for now and tomorrow, meaning today, will be the only day that it really has to go unnoticed.)

Getting off the bucket, I tightened the belts on my leg. Looking outside I saw that the guard on the front door was gone.

(The second guard should be inside the building now.)

Leaving from the main exit is a bit risky now. I better exit the building from a back window on the first floor.

(I have not seen how this guard does his rounds inside the school. So for all I know is that he walks fast. In any case, I better go to the staircase and wait there. If the guard ends up using the stairs I'm on, I should then be able to hear him or even see him, if so I can just go to a higher floor until he climbs up and leaves, then I can go down the stairs.)

Making my way to the staircase, I go halfway up the third floor and stay there for a few minutes.

(I should actually go up a level and wait on the stairs that lead to the roof if I don't have to risk the guard coming up behind me that way.)

Plan in mind, I climbed up the stairs until I'm halfway to the roof.

(Ok, this is the third floor, so, if the guard passes here it will be either to check this floor or to go down towards the exit. In both situations I can go down after he leaves and leave from the back side of the school.)

With that, I buckle down and wait, until I could either hear footsteps or see a light from a flashlight.

About ten minutes in, I start hearing tapping on the stairs. I close my eyes and focus on the footsteps. The tapping starts getting progressively stronger... and then, starts to slowly weaken.

(Ok he is leaving. Or he is suddenly walking very silently for some reason.)

I peek over the stair's railing half expecting to see a face staring at me, its eyes wide open and a joker like grin.

(I watched too many horror movies.)

Seeing the stairs empty, I walked down to the third floor to find it empty as well. I then steel myself and start walking down the stairs to the second floor as silently as I could, the bucket under my arm. About halfway towards the second floor, I stop to check whether the guard is near. Finding no one around, I picked up the pace and walked down to the first floor. Reaching the ground floor I crouched down and moved to where I took the bucket from, leaving it back in its original place before heading towards the back of the school.

After reaching a hallway where I could see the fence that led out of the school and no sight of the first guard, I checked the windows. Some of them were actually fused with the frame but some of them could be opened vertically by pushing them.

(My exit is right ahead of me, but I shouldn't start acting sloppy now. I must leave no trace behind, that includes unlocked windows. While there's a good chance that nobody will even realize it, as I said no need to get sloppy now.)

I took a closer look at the window's lock as I kept thinking... And as luck would have it, the lock seemed to have a peculiar look to it.

(An automatically locking mechanism? I need to check this out)

I find the first locked window, unlock it, push the window open, then close it back.

A short 'click' could be heard as the window fitted back into its original place.

(The window can be locked from the outside, nice.)

I unlock the window once more, open it and slide outside. After I got out I closed the window, hearing that satisfying 'click' once again. I then turn around and silently start running towards the fence. Once I was near it I tossed the screwdriver on the other side again, climbed the fence and vaulted over to the other side.

Landing on the other side I take the screwdriver from the ground. I then took off my half mask and removed my hood after I checked my surroundings, then, I broke off into a dead run, sprinting as fast as I could away from the school.

I kept running for about... five minutes? My only target being to avoid people. After finally reaching a distant alleyway, I stop, look back and take a deep breath.

"Ninja mode, off, beep."

I turn around, exit the alley and casually start heading towards my apartment.

(And with that done all that's left to do is... to get ready for tomorrow, oh boy... fun.)

After about thirty minutes, I made it to my apartment.

I pick the keys from under the mat and dust myself off to get rid of some of the dirt I had on me from all the bush hugging, then headed inside and instantly threw all the stuff I was wearing to a bin, then took a bath.

(I still got more clothes to wear and I'll probably be stuck with my school uniform for a while. I could say that I was feeling cold and wore two shirts underneath, but that's about it on clothing.)

After finishing my bath and changing to some new clothes I sit on my chair and turn on the screen of my computer. I look at the time... and give off a heavy sigh.

"Three a.m. I should be able to get four hours of sleep at least."

I let off a yawn, get up from the chair and fall straight on the bed... falling asleep in a matter of seconds...

The computer screen still on, ticking away the minutes to Z-day like a reverse countdown.

Calm? before the storm

1 Day until Z-Day, Morning.

annoying alarm noises

...

annoying alarm noises intensifies

...

Five minutes later, another alarm starts going off.

The most annoying sound in the world arrived to provide backup for the annoying alarm noises

The ear-piercing medley of sounds made me jump on my bed. My phone, the piece of technology responsible for that unholy sound, laying right next to my ear, going off in full volume... I forcefully silenced the alarm while simultaneously glaring at the screen in front of me.

"Ughhhh... who's the idiot that had the bright idea of putting 'that' as an alarm..."

-FOUR HOURS AGO-

Laying on the bed while looking at the alarm's configuration on my phone as I try to decide on an alarm tone.

"There's no way I'll be able to wake up in four hours just from the normal alarm. Sadly, it seems I'll have to resort to some headache inducing methods."

-RIGHT NOW-

"... oh..."

I put my hands on the temples of my head as I tried to massage the headache out of them.

"I was right about waking up at least... and of getting a headache."

I groggily get out of the bed and head towards the bathroom to splash some water to my face in order to wake up...

After almost drowning myself in the sink I head out of the bathroom and sit by my desk before looking at the computer screen.

"Last day of peace huh, or at least it should be if the outbreak starts the same day it did in the anime... though, now that I think about it. Even if it doesn't happen, I'm still in as deep shit as ever."

Shaking the morbid thought out of my head I get up from the chair and get dressed in my uniform so I can head out.

"I'll have to get something to eat on my way to school. I also need to figure out what to do there as I have no plans for today. Probably some last minute physical training. What with Kohta and hiding a weapon at school I've been neglecting it somewhat. Not that one day of training would do much at this point, but the more the merrier... Hmm, I should also decide whether I should try to make contact with the rest of the group without looking like a creeping weirdo... Yeah, good luck with that me."

I put the screwdriver in my bag, so that I don't end up somehow forgetting it home during Z-Day, then pocket the keys and head out of the apartment.

After making a brief stop at the usual convenience store and buying something to eat, I continued making my way towards the school.

"YAWN... ughhh... I'm getting sleepy again. I'll fall asleep in class like this."

On my way to school I decided to keep my eyes open for any signs of unusual disturbances. Sirens blaring, emergency vehicles rushing by, or even a panicking pedestrian, really, anything that could be used as proof for a sign of what is about to come.

"What could be considered a sign though? If I were to meet a shambling corpse, then it would be too late too matter. And if I start seeing cop cars and ambulances sprinting left and right that would also mean that it's too late"

Giving up as fast as I started, I stopped bothering to look for signs of an upcoming zombie apocalypse and picked up my pace.

Once I made my way to school I went to my class and slumped down on my desk.

(There is one more thing I need to figure out, and that is if this whole thing follows the anime timeline of events or the manga.)

I close my eyes, focusing on one small detail I had noticed so far concerning the matter.

(If I remember correctly. Takashi, in the manga, stayed on the roof when he skipped class. In the anime on the other hand he stayed on the stairs instead. And I've seen him one to many times wasting away at the stairs so far. Plus in the manga he didn't look THAT dejected about Rei. In the anime, he looked much worse. So, considering how dejected he looks right now, along with his predilection of haunting the stairway, it's two points for the anime, and zero for the manga. The last nail that will decide what will eventually happen will be tomorrow. If Takashi meets Morita before the outbreak, then it will probably follow the manga's line of events. If he is on the stairs again and Saya is the one that meets with him, then it will probably follow the anime's course.)

After I stopped pondering about tomorrow. With my eyes still closed, I started to nod off, at least until the bells rang out, indicating that the class is going to start. Forcing me to open my eyes.

(Got to stay awake, can't get in trouble with the teachers again. Even if this might be the last day they can really do crap about it)

What followed is an agonizing hour of fighting off my urge to just hit my head on the desk and go to sleep, until the bells finally rang out again, indicating that the class was over. Many of the other students then got up from their seats and went their own way, be it alone or with their friends. After the class was almost empty I finally got up and left the classroom.

I walked by the vent to make sure it was as I left it last night, then passed by the stairs to see if Takashi was still there. And yep, like clockwork, sitting there, moping about. I'm not gonna bother him though, figured talking to him would return me with nothing again, so I left him be.

(This break is too short for me to go to the gym and do anything worthwhile, so I should wait for the next period's break as it's much longer. I'm also too sleepy to think of doing anything else, so I'll just aimlessly walk around and see if there's something else I can do.)

After strolling about in the school for some time, the bell rang. Signalling me that I have to prepare myself for another hour of trying to keep myself awake. With that cheery thought in head, I trudged back to class...

It was... in the middle of the lesson when I got an idea that I would probably have thought much earlier if my brain was not on a strike at the moment.

(I could just go and hang out with Kohta today... He probably won't mind, and it will help me interact with him on Z-day. Not now though, as I'm going to run some laps at the gym to wake myself up.)

After I decided on my next plan of action I then got back into trying to keep myself awake, while also trying to make it look like I'm actually paying attention to class.

(I just hope the teacher won't ask me anything because I'm hearing jack of what he is saying right now)

And, an hour then passed, with the teacher thankfully ignoring me. So once the lesson was out, I got up, picked up my bag and then headed straight to the gym.

While I was on my way to the gym, I peered into my bag

(Spare shirt, check, water bottle, check. Hmmm... actually, I should bring some extra clothes in my bag tomorrow. Using the excuse that I was planning on going for a run right after school if anybody bothers to ask. I don't want to stay in my school uniform for more than I have to, and I'm sure that the guys don't change clothes in Rika's apartment. Hell, I don't remember if they even actually wash them, as you never see them wearing anything else. Then again, they would probably smell like ass if they didn't, and the Humvee doesn't have the best ventilation system... Actually, didn't Alice pee on Takashi that one time? Yep I'm pretty sure she did, so Takashi should actually do, smell like ass... Maybe that's the reason why they took turns sitting on the roof... pppfft.)

While I found the thought of the humvee smelling like piss funny enough to have to hold myself off from laughing, the students that turned their heads to me after hearing me, did not seem to agree with me... Not that I expected anyone to actually know what I'm thinking about. So, I straightened my jacket, ignored the soon to be dead people and picked up my pace.

(Smooth going there, me.)

Arriving at the empty gym I put my bag down and look at the inside of the gym. My eyes then fell on the banner, the one that two days ago caused me to start freaking out about 'why' I was here.

(It might be because this is the last day before shit hits the fan. Or because yesterday I had a change of pace from my usual routine by

hanging out with Kohta. But I don't feel like losing my shit right now... The calm before the storm as they say, no?)

Getting my head into the game, I looked at my phone to make sure that I had enough time to do some laps before the next bell. Nodding to myself after looking at the phone's clock, I then proceeded to put the phone inside my bag and started running around the gym.

(The increase in my heartbeat and blood flow should wake me up. And if not, then I'll probably end up tripping and planting my face on the gym floor. The impact after that will wake me up for sure. Win-win either way.)

Ten minutes in, and I could feel my head beginning to clear up.

(Good, seems to be working. By the time I'll have to head back to class, I'll be wide awake.)

While I was jogging around the gym I started thinking about tomorrow again.

(Tomorrow, same time, I'll probably be running for my life. Or well, running might be an overstatement. If the zombies are blind like they should be, I'll probably be walking very silently rather than running at full speed, unless of course, something catastrophic happens... other than the dead rising to eat to living that is. Hum, At the very least it won't be that hard for me to navigate through the school as long as I'm quiet, and thankfully, being quiet is something I was always good at.

As for fighting, I still pray that the dead do have fragile skulls, rather than Takashi and co being able to swing with the force of a truck. If the worst comes to shove, I'll just focus on knocking them down and then escaping. If they are as slow and dumb as they looked in the anime and manga, I'll have more than enough time to act after they get disoriented once they hit the ground.

Countering shouldn't be that hard either. As long as they don't grab me I can probably outmanoeuvre and trip them up. If I can, for example, grab one by the outside part of their arm, I should be able to just yank it away from me, or even move behind it without letting it block me off by 'hugging' me... Well, all of my musings and planning only counts if the zombies actually have the same attributes the anime portrayed them to have. Otherwise, I'm about to be caught unprepared and I'll probably end up very dead, very fast.)

As I finished ruminating about the very close future, I heard the bells ring, signalling that the next class was about to start. I stopped jogging, and headed to the bathroom after picking up my spare shirt from my bag. After I fished changing shirts, I headed back to class.

(The next couple of lessons have short breaks so I could go find Kohta and see what he's up to. I just hope that he won't see me as a walking ticket to a gun range now.)

The next two lessons passed by normally, with nothing unusual happening other than the occasional jackass making fun of how I was spaced out yesterday after PE.

And after the lessons finally ended, I went towards Kohta's class, which I now knew the location of as he told me so yesterday. In order to see if he's there.

(Great, now I'm feeling nervous again.)

I was halfway down the stairs and was about to go to the hallway where Kohta's homeroom is when I noticed a purple haired girl walking on the hallway in front of me.

(Saeko?... Scratch my previous worries. NOW I'm nervous... Fuck, what do I do? I can't just walk up to her and be all like 'Hur-Dur Ello Lets Be Friends, Because, I Know YoUr SeCrEt.. Yeah, I can see that happening. Damn it, who knew it could be so hard... speaking to people you never thought you'd meet)

"Hey you're blocking the way. Move"

(At best she will think that I'm some kind of creep, and at worst she'll go all sadistic yandere on me without the dere. Well, the anime portrayed her as a kind, cool and collected person even if she was partly faking it. So I don't think I'll be having her bokken landing on my head... At least not here, with other people around. Not sure what will happen to me outside of school if I botch my charisma roll though.)

"HEY STUPID ARE YOU DEAF!?"

My shoulders jerked upward after a shout from behind startled me, causing me to slightly jump in place. I turned around to see who else but the other person I'm the most nervous at interacting with, Saya... and she looked royally pissed. Her hands were folded under her chest and her face was locked in a rictus of fury with a piercing glare.

(Shit)

"Sorry didn't mean to hog the stairs." I moved to the side as I apologised.

"Ughhh."

That's all she said as she stormed past me.

(Well, I fucked up. At least I met Saya... ? Though now I wish I hadn't. Good job, me.)

Looking at the hallway again, I see Saya entering a classroom and Saeko was nowhere to be seen.

(Well, Saeko is gone and Saya is in the same class as Kohta. I really don't want to go in there right now.)

So, I go down the stairs, turn the other way around, and head towards the exit.

(That went smashingly...)

After making my way outside, I sat on the nearest bench while taking a small bun wrapped in plastic out of my jacket's pocket. I have not eaten yet, as on the big lunch break, I was at the gym.

While eating, I aimlessly scan my surroundings for something to get my mind off the day, and as 'luck' would have it, I spot Rei with Hihashi being all couple-like nearby. Then, I turn my head around and look back at the school, scanning the school to look for the place where Takashi usually sits, moping.

(Yep, there he is... and I think he is staring at those two right now?... My condolences dude... But I still think that you're a fucking lucky bastard.)

I then looked back at the couple.

(Still, I know that Rei is still interested in Takashi. So what the fuck is she doing?)

Finishing my bun I get up and head back towards my class.

(Girls are fucking weird I tell ya.)

After making my way to class and slumping on my desk, I took a look outside.

(It's funny though... Do I really need a god-damn zombie apocalypse to somehow manage and interact with the rest of the cast? I really do suck at this socializing thing don't I?)

Sighing at my inability to 'man up' as the tryhards would say, I turn my head back to focus on the blackboard and decide to not do anything particular for the rest of the school day. With that in mind, I stayed at my desk with a glassy look in my eyes until all classes ended. Until the final bell rang out, signaling the end of school.

I got up from my chair and walked out of the class, passed by the vent again to make sure it hadn't been spotted, and then headed towards the exit, when an idea hit me.

(Oh wait, I could call Kohta and ask if he wants to hang out.) I take my phone out, but instantly I hit a roadblock.

(Right, I never asked for his number. It would do no good even if I did though, as my phone has no sim card in it... ughhh)

I put the phone back in my pocket and continued walking. After reaching the main gates, I looked back at the school.

(Tomorrow, I must either be with Takashi's team or be dead.)

With that morbid thought in my head, I turned around and walked out of school.

HALF AN HOUR LATER

Not long after I arrived home I was sitting on my chair, looking at an online map for a sports shop.

(I do have some cash left over that was meant for food that I can spend on something else. So, if I go on a last shopping spree today and tomorrow nothing happens, then I can officially say I'm royally fucked.)

The idea that I might have got the date wrong then passed by my mind.

(No, I know I got the date right. I remember the exact date of the outbreak, or at least the day when the zombies reached Fujimi High, because I used that same date on one of the games I played as a starting date for the ingame outbreak as well. The date of the outbreak was actually shown on the TV Takashi and co used to see how the media reacted to the zombies in the staff room, so I should have the correct date down.)

I get up from the chair and print a list of the things I want to buy, along with a map of the city for the last leg of my preparations.

(Bandages, a better, more comfortable bag, a navigation map and food that will last at least until tomorrow night. The school does not have a strict regulation on bags, so I'll be able to take the better bag with me tomorrow. And by better, I mean a bag that does not have any metal parts dangling about and I can firmly secure on my back, so it will not move around when I run or climb.

I'll just use the excuse that I was planning to go Parkour running right after school, so no one would raise an eyebrow as to why I brought a different bag, along with a change of clothes and bandages. I'll also put the field hunting boots and my gloves in it so I can wear them after the panic starts.

Now, the bandages I can buy from any pharmacy, and use them as minor protection on my hands from scratches or to avoid any infected blood from getting into a cut.

While never shown, I don't actually know if only the saliva is infectious. Saeko, being a close-range fighter, and 'occasionally' going bat shit crazy on the zombies, should have had blood splashed into her mouth or eyes more than once. Yet, nothing happened to her, thankfully. So maybe it's only whatever is in their mouth that can spread the virus? Perhaps it's because the dead don't have any blood circulation so there is a chance that the infection is only in their head? Uhh, anyway, I'm wasting daylight now.

A map is obviously needed for when Takashi and Rei get split up from the rest of the group, so we can decide on a meeting point. In the anime, they picked the police station but met on the bridge that linked the two parts of the city together by sheer dumb luck. And from how the characters moved afterward, I can say the police station is on the other part of the city, over the bridges.)

After pocketing whatever cash I had left, I took my keys and headed out. The sun was still out, the day looking as great as ever, for now.

I start jogging towards my destination, occasionally picking up speed as a last minute exercise.

First, I stopped by a sports store to buy a bag. After a little time spent searching, I ended up with a black tear resistant bag that had no metal parts other than the zippers, along with two extra belts that went around the lower part of the chest and waist. I asked the employee if I could wear the bag to test it out.

The moment the employee nods at me with a 'yes', I put on the bag, checking if it fits me and how easy it is to get something from the side straps without taking it off, along with how much it shakes if I run in place... and yes, the employee did get confused when he looked at a teenager play-jogging in his store.

(This is big enough to hold all the books I have, along with my boots, a spare change of clothes or two and some extras, like a phone charger, a small pistol, or something of that size. The two sides got belts that will be perfect to strap on a bigger gun or whatever close range weapon I might end up with. The fact that I can also grab whatever is on the sides without taking the bag off is a definite plus. Now, the extra 'outside' pockets where I could fit ammo, clips, or other need to get fast materials like bandages and such sold it to me. Me likes this bag.)

I make a thumbs up motion to the employee that he returns with an awkward smile. He also asked me if I wanted to buy a compass, flashlight and a swiss army knife, as I said that I will be going on hiking trips with this bag. Which I'll admit, made me feel stupid that I didn't think of buying em myself.

(Thanks mister employee.)

After taking off the bag, buying it along with the extras and then putting it back on, I head off for my other two targets. That swiss

knife cost me like half the cash I had left though. At least it does seem to have a crapload of things on it... is that, a magnifying glass?)

Second place I stopped by, my favorite convenience store. Where I bought enough food to last me until tomorrow night.

(Last time I get to visit this place. The poor employees will probably have a hard time tomorrow with all these glass walls slash windows. Good luck, you'll need it)

After wishing the clerks good luck in my head, I start heading towards a pharmacy. On the way, I also passed by an electronics store that I looked up on the net.

(I was thinking of buying a solar power bank but the H.A.N.E, or High Altitude Nuclear Explosion to the layman, will probably fry whatever circuitry it has in it. While a H.A.N.E, after reading about it online, should not be as lethal as it was in the anime, I cannot risk it. Maybe the explosion will be near us or maybe H.A. in this world are more effective. Whatever the case, I should spend what cash I got left on something that will be useful at a hundred present rate.)

Leaving the electronics shop behind, I stopped jogging and started casually walking until I reached the pharmacy.

Going inside, I asked the clerk to give me two rolls of white bandage. After I finished paying for them, I left the shop to find a nearby place to sit down.

(What else could I bring with me to school... that wouldn't look too weird at least?)

I then imagine myself showing up to school in a fully plated, heavy knight armor, great sword and crossbow attached.

"I was aiming to parkour with extra weight for a challenge."

(Yea right.)

I chuckle to myself, get up and set my course back towards my apartment.

As I was now walking, instead of jogging, it was taking me way longer to head back, and the sun was slowly losing its bright shine, signaling that the day was slowly ending.

(Last day is almost over... I expected that I would be freaking out like a squirrel on coffee right about now. Yet, I'm weirdly calm for some reason. I just hope I won't wake up with the outbreak banging on my door. Maybe I should go and keep my favorite night guard some company today as well... Yeah not a good idea. Don't want to be sleepy tomorrow. Although I doubt the adrenaline will let me feel sleepy even if I don't sleep at all tonight.)

Looking at the town around me, I couldn't find anything amiss, nothing to tell me that tomorrow the world will go to shit.

(Wish I had an emp resistant yacht with an unlimited power supply, a fridge with infinite food and an unending collection of video games... heh.) I chuckle to myself once more.

Once I reached my apartment I headed inside, placed my new bag on my bed and filled it with what I will need for tomorrow, along with some books to test out how silent the bag was under heavy load. After spending a good hour testing the bag and finding it to be worth the cash I paid for it, I took it off, opened it and looked at what I have packed.

The clothes I packed inside were a jacket with a hood, a long-sleeved shirt and a pair of pants that would be comfortable to do stunts with. Along with a change of underwear and socks.

(After I end up with the team, hopefully, I might be able to switch into more tear resistant clothes like leather. But for now, this will do.)

Feeling that I spent enough time fussing about the bag, I left it on the bed and headed to my computer.

Looking at all the files I had saved in it and recalling all the time I spent preparing, along with all the decisions I have made... Yea... not good for my mental health

(Come on, I'll be fine. I can climb walls, I can swing wooden sticks very strongly and I can shoot with metal sticks pretty accurately. I'll be fine... for the initial part of the outbreak at least.)

Truth is though, I didn't spend too much time researching on how to survive long term. Maybe I didn't really care? Maybe I didn't think that I would survive that long? It didn't matter now. I made my choices and the curtain was about to rise, the play, about to start.

(You know what? fuck it. Tonight, I'm going to watch movies, I'm giving myself a break.)

I pick a list of zombie movies that would last up until midnight. I felt a bit stupid that I wanted to watch zombie movies right before the actual zombie apocalypse but ehh... fuck that too.

After hitting the play button I slump in my chair and fold my arms.

(Wish I had some popcorn.)

Letting the next few hours slip by me unnoticed. I watched what will soon become my reality. After that, I ate my last meal for today, brushed my teeth and went to sleep. And for what might be the last time, I feel asleep in my apartment. Right as the clock hit Midnight.

Z-Day.

At the gates

Same old annoying alarm noises

...

I was sitting on my bed with my phone in my hands, looking at it as it kept ringing.

"Woke up before the alarm sounded off... Guess I'm a little on edge after all huh."

The shutters on my windows were half closed, what little sunlight that invaded the desolate room was not doing the room any favors either. I stretch and close my phone, then head towards the bathroom to wash up.

After splashing some water on my face I look at myself in the mirror.

"Huh, I should be looking much worse knowing what is going to happen in a few hours."

I return to the living room and open my computer, sitting on the chair in the process.

DayZ

"Seven AM, going to leave earlier today. It would be really lame if I got caught by the outbreak while I was heading to school. Shame that the stores only open after ten here, I had second thoughts about buying a solar power bank... But ehh, not that I have any money left. Oh well, what's done is done"

I spin my chair around till I'm looking at what I prepared last night.

"Bag" I get up, reach for the bag and then open it. Doing a last check to make sure I was not missing anything.

"Extra clothes, check. Swiss knife, check. Map, check. Compass, check. Flashlight, check. Screwdriver, check. Bandages, check. Food for today, check. Yacht keys... One can always dream."

Closing the bag, I throw it around my shoulder, take my keys and walk next to the tower of my computer.

"My friend, I'm afraid that's all the time we got left." I then unplug the computer, open the case and take out the hard drives, go to the sink, open it and throw them in. About twenty seconds later I picked them back up, thoroughly soaked, and walked to the front door of my apartment, opening it.

"Last time that I see this place. If the outbreak happens, I won't be returning here for obvious reasons. If the outbreak won't happen, I'll have to go and find myself an abandoned island, then make friends with the trees and monkeys, or face debt charges... or worse. I really dug myself into a goddamn hole didn't I. Maybe I'll go find Saya and ask her to call me stupid"

I shake my head and turn to glance at my 'house'.

(Today my future is going to change to either running from zombies, or running from the Yakuza... I find running from zombies more appealing right now to be honest.)

I walk out my apartment and follow the street towards the school. To make my future a fait accompli, I also threw my apartment keys to the first trash bin I ran into, then threw the hard drives in a different trash bin.

I then stood over the bin for a few seconds.

"A moment of silence for my two terabyte 'homework' folder."

I let out a small chuckle and hurry on my way. To be honest, I didn't feel safe on the streets right now. I wanted to reach the school as fast as possible.

"Won't it be ironic if I end up being the undead that is banging on the school gates?"

Apparently my brain did not appreciate the joke, as I got the sudden urge to start jogging, so I can reach the school faster. So all it really took for me to be in front of the school gates was fifteen minutes, half of my usual commute time.

After reaching my class and leaving my bag on the desk's side that was facing the wall, I sat down. I then spent several seconds staring outside, thinking what exactly I could say if anybody asked why I put all that crap inside my bag.

(Parkour might explain the change of clothes and bandages, but the amount of food inside along with the swiss knife and flashlight seems more reasonable if I was going camping or something. So... parkour camping? Or I can say that I was aiming to do a marathon, a very long marathon.)

I then turn my sight back towards the class, looking at the kids that were chatting among themselves.

(Wonder if any of them will survive.)

That was all I was able to think before the bell rang, with the teacher coming in a few minutes later, causing the class to quiet down.

(Sorry, teach. But today my eyes will be stuck on the gate. I don't even care if it gets me expelled today. It's not like I will be staying in this school either way.)

As the class went on, all I did was indeed stare at the front gate.

(I will not only have to find a way to be out of class to check where Takashi will be at while Teshima gets bit, but I must also be able to get back in my class before the panic starts. As I really don't want to be in the hallway when every single student in this school will have the bright idea to run in a panic like a headless chicken.)

The first class passed normally. Nobody appeared at the gates and nothing seemed to be out of place.

Walking out of the class I passed by the vent, giving it a quick glance. Making sure it was still unbolted before returning back to class for the next period.

(The whole thing is supposed to happen in the middle of a class... but I don't know which one. The undead guy on the gate was dressed like a businessman, so he probably got attacked on his way to work and ended up here. If he was attacked after he was in his office, he would probably have stayed there as a zombie as he would not be smart or mobile enough to wander outside. Other than by falling outside a window or something. Yet, other than looking like he just pulled nine all-nighters straight he didn't look hurt, the giant chunk of his back missing excluded of course.)

And with that thought, the bell rang again, signaling the second lesson's start.

(If it's going to happen, then just happen dammit, waiting for it is not doing any good for my mental health.)

As the second lesson was in session, I could not help but start thinking what I was going to do if the outbreak didn't happen.

(I wonder if I'm able to use planes and ships to travel alone at my age. 'I' was sent here by my school as an exchange student based on what I saw in the school documents that I had with me.

Maybe... I should have learned how to drive a boat. Better chance of escaping people by sea rather than land, add that japan is a frigging island. Hm, Most boats do have a steering wheel though, and I do know some basics from playing video games. Like that the throttle can look like the one that planes got and... well that's all I actually know, can you hot-wire a boat?)

A loud thud jerked me out of my thoughts, the noise actually came from right in front of me, from the window beside me. Looking at it, I saw that it had some chalk dust on it. Looking down, I saw chalk, broken in pieces.

I turn my head to see the teacher glaring at me.

(Great, just, great. This is exactly what I need right now)

The teacher must have been bored of doing his lesson because he asked me to stand up and go to him, before he started an annoying monologue about... I don't know, I didn't really care about it to actually sit and listen to what the teacher had to say to be honest.

Between the teacher's loud monologue, the smirking students and my own state of mind, I had just about enough.

"I need to go to the bathroom."

That's all I said as I walked out of the class.

(That... might not have been my best idea, but I'll make it work. I can still keep a watch on the front gate from somewhere else. If the dead man appears I don't think the teacher will have a lot of time for chewing me out before the panic starts.)

With that thought in mind, I headed towards a hallway with a clear view of the front gates, that was also near the stairs I usually see Takashi at...

About thirty minutes passed with my eyes locked at the front gate. I had long since stopped thinking, as it was only going to give me a headache in the end...

Until, something happened... not the zombies sneaking on my ass, thankfully. Loud footsteps coming from my right. I turned my head to see Saya walking with her usual pissed off attitude. She just stormed

passed me while stomping her feet, I think she didn't even realise I was there.

(Wonder what set her off this time.)

I then turned to my left, looking at her as she stomped away.

(She would pester Takashi that he was skipping class, yet completely ignore me. I guess she only bothers people she likes huh.)

And a few seconds later, it hit me.

(Wait, didn't Saya also skip class to speak to Takashi in the anime? And the way she just stormed off now... she looked like she just had an argument.)

(SHIT!)

I spring myself off the wall and break into a sprint towards where I just saw Saya walk away from... the stairs.

Stopping at the top of the stairs, I see none other than Takashi. Staring at the gate. And... I knew what he was looking at, I knew this scene by heart. The scene that has become etched into my head and only got reinforced by the time I spent panicking over what's to come...

'It' has begun.

I looked at the gate myself, for a final confirmation.

(The dead. They are at the gates.)

I did a full u-turn and started running to my class as fast as I could. While I knew I had time before the panic started, as Takashi had enough time to rush to Rei. I just felt that I need to be fast, very fast.

Reaching my class I slam the door open, startling some of the students that were seated near the door. The teacher looked at me with the scowl of the century, and some students started giggling again. Ignoring everything, I move quickly to the back of the class, grabbing my desk and pulling it further towards the back, pretty much shoving it into the corner of the classroom.

The teacher narrowed his eyes as he looked at me.

"We will have a chat once the class is over" Was all he said before he continued his lesson.

(No we won't...)

It was weird, but all the anxiety I have felt up to this moment since waking up today had vanished. The moment I saw the first zombie back there, confirmed what was going to happen and what I was going to do.

I even felt some relief to be honest. Relief that everything I did so far was not in vain... or that I will not end up in jail or the bottom of Tokyo Bay...

While I was busy preparing myself the speakers in my classroom crackled alive.

(The panic is going to start any minute now.)

I looked at the speaker that was installed on the ceiling, near the front exit of the class.

A voice, probably a teacher's, started ordering the students to evacuate, only to be suddenly cut off. Then, the speaker once again went live. Only this time, it was broadcasting the teacher's last moments as he began to panic in the AV room, shouting for help. Until he let out a scream, and then silence.

Looking back at the teacher, I see him frozen in place, the chalk on his desk slowly rolling towards a free fall.

(So, this is the class I was actually in.)

Was all I managed to think as the chalk hit the ground, smashing into bits, acting as the signal for everybody to go bat shit crazy.

You know in the anime you never think about it, but the sudden change from dead silence to everybody screaming at once is deafening. Like the school itself had started screaming along with the students. Morbid as it is, I couldn't think of it as anything else but the ringing of a lunch bell for the zombies.

Pandemonium ensued in the class as the students and the teacher alike started running towards the door, smashing into each other. Each one trying to scream louder than the one next to them.

And just like that, the class was empty. Only me, myself and I... and the screams from beyond the wall.

I slowly got up from my desk, picked up my bag, strapped it on my back as well as I could, then headed to the opened door, and closed it.

I turn around and look at the class.

(I will check if I can find anything of use here while the sea of death passes outside my front door.)

I go over some of the bigger bags, hoping to find something that might be of use...

Sadly, most of the bags had nothing interesting inside, aside from one that had a cell phone which I picked up and turned to a silent, non vibration mode.

(Taking out the battery to remove the SIM might lock it behind a password, so I should just keep it like this, in case I need loud

distraction later.)

I pocket the extra cell phone, then grab the nearest chair and head to the door, opening it slowly.

I peek outside at both directions of the hallway. Seeing the hallway empty, with no blood splatters or bodies littering the floor I opened the door completely and then, with chair in hand I went to the vent. I place the chair under the vent, take the screwdriver out of the side pocket of my bag and unscrew the last screw that was holding the vent cover. With nothing holding it in place, the vent once more fell to the side, hanging by the last bolt. Reaching inside I grab the handle of the bat I painstakingly hid.

(All this to hide a bat... why can't I be in America? Sneak myself a minigun and rocket launcher...)

Bat in hand, I looked around me before pulling it out of the vent completely, then stepped down the chair. With the screwdriver back in the side pocket I once more scan my surroundings. I could still hear screams all around me. but they seemed different now, they were not the screams of panic. They were screams of fear...

The hallway was still empty, clean. Yet when I looked outside the window I saw a massacre in full display. People getting thrown to the ground, pinned down by groups of walking corpses, fresh blood being splattered all over the place. While the ones still alive used others as bait so they could escape. Worst of all were the people that died, only for them to come back and bite whoever was unlucky enough to care for them.

I let a huge breath out of my nose and walk towards the end of the hallway then look over the corner.

The hallway I was looking at now had a staircase in the middle, linking the floors together. Next to the staircase, I could see a student on his knees, next to another student who was on the floor. I could only see half of the body of the one that was on the floor, with

the rest of it probably being on the staircase, which I could not see from the angle I was looking from.

I did not need to see the other half though, the pink line of flesh I could see going from the fallen student's stomach to the mouth of the one that was kneeling on top of him was enough to make me understand what I was looking at.

I was prepared to see some gruesome stuff from here on out, but I guess the first time is never easy. The fact that the first gruesome thing I wind up seeing is a corpse chewing on somebody's guts ain't helping either.

(Good thing I haven't eaten anything yet. My stomach would be throwing one hell of a party right now if I did... Still how should I call these things anyway? I have been jumping around names until now... Maybe I should just call them 'them' like the cast?... Hmm, nahh, too weird to use... I will stick with corpses, for now at least.)

Hitting myself in the forehead with my knuckles, I try to focus on my next plan of action.

(When Takashi was on the roof, it was already crawling with corpses. Meaning the corpses must have already overrun all the lower floors to also be up there.

And seeing how the staircase is being used as a dining table right now. It could mean that that has already happened. The reason why the hallway I'm in is clean is because nobody had a reason to run here, or didn't manage to, for now anyway.)

I go over the corner and walk towards the snacking student, his chewing getting louder as I get closer...

After I closed in enough to still be out of leaping range but have a clear view of the stairs I stopped.

(The stairs are clear, only these two are here. I guess the one on the floor tried to climb back up and got caught. Or he was running down and bumped into the one that is now snaking on him, seeing that his legs point towards the stairs and he's belly up.)

No matter, now that I got only two potential walking corpses here, it's the best time to check if a hit to the head is enough to stop them for good. Or if it'll just get them pissed off and turn me into a lunchbox.)

With that in mind, I lift my bat slightly and grab the handle with both hands as I silently side-step towards the kneeling corpse. Once I was within swinging range of the corpse, I lifted my bat higher to the side of my head. And with a slight turn of my upper body, I swung down...

With a rather loud thud, the bat makes contact with the head of the chewing corpse, sending it sideways and then flat against the wall, smashing its head from both sides.

The body stays like that for a few seconds before sliding forward, falling down and stopping once and for all.

I turn my head and look at the second body that was on the floor.

(No time to celebrate yet, this guy will probably get up as well.)

I take a few steps back and wait. All while looking around me to make sure the sound did not attract anything. A few moments later, the second body started twitching, and then rose to a sitting position.

(Alright, now to test out just how smart these things are... I can't believe I'm saying this, but I'm letting this one get up... I must be going mental, because I'm not freaking out right now.)

Using my bat I give it a quick poke in the back of the head and quickly take a big step back.

(Nothing, no reaction. Just like Saya theorized.)

That experiment over with, I started my next one.

I lift my foot and then bring it back down on the floor with enough strength to make an audible sound, then walk a few feet away so I'm not in the way.

The sitting corpse reacts to the sound as it lethargically turns its head to where I was a few seconds ago. It then slowly starts stumbling to a standing position and shambles to where I had struck the floor, then passes it and bumps into the window.

(And they are either blind, or insanely stupid. It just moved past where the sound originated and into the window beyond it. Meaning it just picked the direction the sound came from and followed it until it found an obstacle to hit into... or bite into.)

There were more things I wanted to test out, but I didn't want to push my luck. Not now at least.

I silently walk close to the zombie that was now making out with the window and take a swing at the back of its head with only one hand, my good one.

The impact of the bat causes the window to crack and the zombie to stumble backward onto its own guts that were on the floor, causing it to slip and fall down. It then started shambling about on the floor.

(Not dead, but it does seem to have trouble getting up.)

I jerk forward and bring the bat down to the dead guy's head, causing a splatter of blood to appear on the floor and him to finally stop moving.

(I still don't understand how they could track Takashi and his team later in the anime. They were actively chasing them in some cases. Maybe they can actually sense heat like Kohta theorized? So after linking a sound with a heat source they will go after the heat source with a fervor instead?)

Scratching my head, I turn to the stairs, to see that trouble has arrived. The sound of my bat smashing against the second corpse must have attracted some of the corpses from downstairs.

(They are dumb enough to get easily tricked, yet they are smart enough to understand that a sound came from a floor above them, to find the stairs and then climb them without falling over... ughhh... or they were already on the lower part of the stairs..)

I sigh in my head and move away from the stairs. Then begin walking down the clear hallway, with each of my steps making splashing noises.

Must have been the blood I stepped on as my shoes were starting to get rather noisy as I walked.

(Right. Time to change footwear.)

Still standing, I take my shoes off using my feet, bend over, grab them and throw them in the direction from which I came from causing any corpse that was heading towards my way to turn around.

I continued walking with only my socks for a bit until I was far enough from where I threw my shoes to feel safe. After taking a look around, I take off my bag, unzip it and take the plastic bag that had my boots in them along with my gloves.

(Boots over stuffy shoes any day.)

I take the boots out of the plastic bag and wear them. After folding the plastic bag I put it back in, closing the bag and strapping it back on my back.

Then I put on the gloves and test my grip on the bat.

(Not bad. Now to figure out what to do next.)

I glanced at the window to see the sun was still out, going strong. Then continue walking straight in the hallway.

(Takashi and Rei will stay up on the roof until the sun begins to set. Meaning that I need to find a way to survive until then, as the group will not meet until sunset. I could try to find Saeko or Kohta. Both are still alive wandering the school right now, with Saeko probably going ham on any poor meatbag that approaches her and Kohta being needed by Saya.

Now, the only time Saeko was shown before the group met up, she was going down a staircase, meaning she's either on the first or second floor right now. She then would end up in the nurse's office that is on the first floor, so she probably went from the second floor to the first. Saya and Kohta are also running around from what looked like probably the second or third floor.)

While I was in thought I heard moaning coming from in front of me. Two corpses were shambling towards me, or towards my direction at least.

I narrow my eyes and put my back against the wall on the side, while holding my bat from each corner with one hand so I can use it as a shield if one of them lunged at me.

As the two corpses shambled passed me, they didn't even seem to realize that I was there.

After they moved away, I got off the wall and started walking.

(This is not good, I'm going to get surrounded if I let these two walk and find more of these things ahead of me.)

Realization in mind, I stop in my tracks and turn around, then walk to the two shambling corpses in front of me...

Using both hands, I take a swing on the side of the head of the one that was near the wall causing its head to be smashed between the

bat and the wall, making it fall down with a thud.

The second one, hearing the sound, moans and turns around to me, only to be met with a sideways swing from a bat to the side of its face before it could completely turn around.

Stumbling, it moves a few feet forward and then falls down. Moments later, it puts its hands in a push up motion as it tries to get up. I walk up to it and stomp my foot on its back, causing it to fall flat again, and in a quick motion, I raise my bat and swing it with a golf swing-like motion on the downed corpse, blood once again painting the floor red.

(Well, I suppose this verifies that they are more brittle than a normal human, or I swing like a truck like the rest of the cast.)

That over with, I turn back and head down the hallway again.

Turning over the corner after the hallway ended, I found another flight of stairs. To my surprise, they were empty, or more precisely the corpses there were all dead, like dead-dead.

Closing in on the staircase I hit the floor with my foot trying to make sure that they are actually dead and won't try to surprise jump scare me. None of them reacted, but still just in case, I took a long way around them.

I head on the stair's railing and lean on over it, looking down in the process.

(If Saeko had passed through here, then I'm too late. In the anime the first floor is like a dance floor full of dead people in the early hours.)

I give an annoyed sigh.

(I can't risk it, I will have to go through them just to check 'if' Saeko went on the first floor or not.)

I leave the bat on the floor and lean on the railing even more, trying to look up this time.

"Nope, can't see jackshit."

(Can't see anything from here, but I don't have much of a choice, I need to pick my poison. This hallway leads to a dead end, going down is just stupid, going back is pointless as the stairs there had corpses, moving ones. So the only way to go is, up.)

I push myself back, pick up the bat and start going up the empty stairs.

Thankfully I met no resistance going up the stairs. While blood and guts were splattered all over the place, that was all there was here. Nothing that would like to check how warm my insides were, are around.

I reached the top of the staircase and checked both directions of the hallway.

The third floor had some unwelcome guests scattered around.

(Most of the corpses are kneeling down and seem to be occupied with eating, so I should be able to walk past them.)

I was about to move to the right side, as it seemed to have less of them, when on the window of the opposite building, I saw two figures.

(Pink hair on a face that is probably frowning and a chubby guy probably looking depressed.)

I smile to myself and turn to look at the hallway that would make me cross paths with them, the left one...

My smile disappeared when I realized which part of the hallway I had to go through.

(Of course, it had to be the one that had more of them... But I can't miss this chance. I might not get another one.)

Steeling myself, I take a deep breath and start moving down the corpse filled hallway, which was made a lot worse by the fact that it also had moving ones...

So, I kept sidestepping to a corpse free wall, waiting for the ones that got too close to pass by before continuing.

(I am a ninja, I am a ninja, I am a ninja. If I get spotted I am a dead ninja.)

Everything was going fine and I was about to be out of the corpse-filled hallway. Until a corpse had the sudden urge to just do a full turn around and walk right into me.

The moment it was too close for comfort I didn't even think. I jumped back hitting my back against the window, and swung... In the worst direction I could have.

The bat impacted the thing's head and the thing's head impacted the nearby lockers as the impact of the bat made it turn around once more and end up in a lunging fall into the lockers, in other words, a lot of noise.

(I just dun an fucked up.)

In a split second, before the corpses could realise that the dinner bell had just rang, I bent my body forward, so their arms won't be able to easily get a hold of me, and break into a sprint. Thankfully, there were only a couple of them left between me and the end of this damn infested hallway.

I picked the first route I saw to be obstacle-free at that moment and started running. A few steps later, I see one of them blocking my way. It was far enough for me to change direction, so I just ran past it after swerving to the left.

Problem is, I was now running next to the wall on my left so I could only swerve to the right. Which would be a bad idea unless I wanted to end up running into one of these things. Before long, another one was blocking my way, this time I was unable to swerve past it. So I held my bat on each side with my hands and smashed it sideways under its armpit. Ducking my head and using my forearm to push its arm away from me so it could not grab me as it stumbled to the right.

With that one now out of the way, there was only one of them left in front of me. My bat was already in a position for a swing, so I grabbed the handle with both my arms and swung for the things head. Causing it to fly to the left and land face first into the windowed wall.

With the hallway in front of me now hostile free, I stop running and quickly look back. Every single one of them was now walking towards me. I then turn my head forward and start walking silently, turning over the next corner a few moments later.

In this hallway there were not as many of the walking corpses. But the few that were here, were heading towards my direction as well.

Undeterred, I continued walking forward silently. Side stepping out of the way of any of the shambling corpses, until I could see Kohta waving at me, with Saya behind him, giving Kohta the stink eye.

(Saya and Kohta must have heard the commotion too. Lucky for me, that made them wait instead of picking up speed.)

Heading towards the two I raise my bat and wave at them. After reaching them I speak up.

"Good to see you're still alive commando." I say in a low tone.

"Y... yea... glad to see you're also still alive from... whatever this is."

I then turned my sight to Saya, who was now eyeing me, still with a frown. I sigh and look around.

The ones behind me were flocking to where I had my little accident, so we were safe from them, for now at least. And, from what I could see, there weren't any hungry corpses in front of us either.

"Ummm this... is Takagi" Kohta says, introducing me to the scowling pinkette.

"Did you get bit?" She says with a sharp tone.

(That is the first thing she tells me? Not even a goddamn 'Hi, nice to meet you person I yelled at yesterday'. Not that I expected anything else from her to be honest.)

"Actually, that's a good question." I answer as I start checking myself for bites or any other wounds.

In the heat of the moment, it could be possible that I got bit, but did not feel it.

After checking myself. It thankfully did not seem to be the case.

"No bites" I look back up at the two of the main cast...

The three of us then spent a couple of awkward seconds looking at each other before deciding to move out.

"Wait, You... aren't you the idiot who was spacing out on the stairs yesterday, the one blocking my way?" Saya speaks up as we start moving, her eyes narrowed.

(Me and my big mouth...)

"Yeah... that would be me." I scratch the back of my head while letting out a dry laugh.

"... Ughhh" Was all she said as she shook her head and walked past me... Me and Kohta following behind her.

(Deja-vu... Maybe going on the first floor and hoping to find Saeko before becoming somebody's lunch was a better idea after all.)

Skippping school

"So they only react to sounds?" Kohta asks in a low tone.

"Yep, they are blind and seem to ignore physical contact with inanimate objects, they might be able to sense heat though. As from what I saw, they seem to realize when they have grabbed a human and they are also able to home in on a running person after getting their initial 'lock on' too... even if that 'lock on' doesn't seem to last very long. As they lose interest pretty fast, and get distracted even faster. I'm just hypothesizing about that though, I didn't have much of a chance to test it out, nor do I have a death wish to experiment how long it will take them till they would lose interest in chasing me, especially when I'm in a closed space." I say as I look back at Kohta.

"I see, that would explain why we were able to just walk around them then." Kohta nods while he keeps speaking quietly.

"Also kind of obvious but, these things are, well, dead" I say with a deadpan look on my face.

"Huh, dead? Don't be ridiculous, if they are dead then why are they still walking around?" Saya butts in with a sharp and rather loud voice.

"I don't know, but you have seen them? I might not be that particularly versed in human biology, but what I do know is that you can't be considered to be very alive if you're chewing your own ripped off arm, half of your back is missing and you are dragging your own guts on the floor. Also Takagi, could you pleeeaaase... talk just a biiiit more quietly?" I turn my head to Saya with a pleading look.

I tried to be as polite and non provocative as I could. And obviously, I failed. This is Saya we're talking about after all.

Saya frowns, puffs her cheeks and answers with a rather loud voice, again.

"And who are you to tell me what to do? And why did you have us stop in this classroom in the first place?"

Right now we were in an empty classroom, as I asked the other two for a 'stop' after I saw them trying to hide behind a couple of lockers when they spotted a couple of corpses 'staring' at our direction. I could have explained how the corpses act right then and there. But I had the strong feeling that Saya would not be able to help herself and would end up with some loud, snarky remark after my explanation.

So, planning ahead for that, I picked an empty classroom in hopes of somewhat soundproofing Saya's outbursts, as she kept speaking loud enough to make every single deadhead turn our direction.

"Ughhh... forget it, I am not here to antagonize you. Kohta and I will check the door. And if it's clear I will signal with my hand so we can move out. We should try to keep the noise and chatter to the minimum after we get out of this room." I say and get up from the chair.

"And who made you the boss anyway?" Saya 'asks' as she silently looked away from me.

Ignoring Saya, I started moving towards the class door.

(God, she might seem cute and all with her tsundere act in the anime. But the fact that all I get from her is tsun and no dere is making me want to start chewing a desk. I had to deal with one too many corpses already, because she was being too loud.

Uhhh, focus, got to keep myself focused. She might act like a total stuck up bitch right now, but she is not a bad person, I hope. And, I also have to make sure Kohta won't end up dead before he gets his custom-made nail gun thingy.)

Going to the door, I cleared my mind and slowly opened and peeked through the door.

(Right side has two of them standing up and three on their knees munching on some unlucky bastard.

Left side has only three, but all of them are on their feet. Normally, I would take the right side as going around the eating ones is much easier, but I don't want to risk it with the other two with me.)

I move back to the classroom, motion Kohta to wait, pick a random pencil case, stuff it up with clutter, close it and then move back to the door. Then hurl the case at some lockers on the right side. While the noise caused the prone zombies to get up and move to the lockers, it also caused the trio on the left to start moving towards the right corridor as well.

As they shambled past the door, I motioned to Kohta to move out. He gets up from his chair and starts moving, followed by an annoyed, yet silent Saya.

After getting out and stealthily walking to the left, the three of us started moving down the hallway with me in the front, Saya in the middle and Kohta bringing up the rear.

"Kohta, if possible keep a lookout behind us. I don't want us to end up surrounded in the wrong moment." I say to him in a hushed tone.

Kohta gapes at me like a fish before he proceeds to simply nod. Saya just kept quiet.

(Got to get Kohta his gun, he's being way too meek like this.)

"Say Naier, what's with the get up?" I hear Kohta ask.

"The bag, shoes and gloves?" I answer without stopping to look back.

"I had a tight schedule today, I was planning to leave right after school and only return tomorrow morning so I packed for it" I responded without waiting for Kohta's input.

"You're going somewhere?" He asks right after.

"Yea a part-time job" I answered once again.

"You have a job?" Kohta returns with another question.

(God damn it dude, stop being so curious. Now I have to make up even more things on the go.)

"Yep" Then, an idea hit me.

"I was helping a friend of the shop owner we met a couple of days ago, you remember him right?" I answered back, hoping that if the gun range owner came into play, it would make Kohta stop asking questions, as him being there with me yesterday was not very legal. Not that being legal mattered in any way right now. But both of them have yet to realize the weight of the situation from what I see.

(I just hope that this won't come back and bite me in the ass.)

"Ohhhhhh I see" Kohta was about to open his mouth again when...

"Will you two shut up already!" Saya butts in, again, with a loud voice.

(Saya, you just got brownie points for this. Even if you were not actually aiming to help here.)

Thankfully Saya's loud voice did not attract anything other than a couple of corpses that were already behind us. So other than the occasional corpse that got wind of us 'somehow' and had to meet the wrong end of my bat, or fall in love with a nearby wall, we moved through the hallways with relative ease.

(What should I do now? I got Saya and Kohta with me, so I could just go straight to the classroom I got the screwdriver from and arm Kohta up. Although that means that he might also run out of ammo sooner... As in the anime he gets his gun at sunset, and we have about an hour before the sky changes color at all.

We could go straight to the faculty room and wait for the rest of the team. With the car and bus keys there, these two will probably agree to go with me if I tell them that I can drive. But then, I won't be sure if the group will meet up at all. Hmm, Saeko and Shizuka, I know they are heading towards that room as well, so all we have to do in order to meet them is wait. That only leaves Rei and Takashi out...

No, no I must make sure Takashi joins up with the group. Bad thoughts, bad Naier, bad.

So, I guess we'll just go get Kohta his gun and then run around until sunset. Worst case, I'll have to let the whole thing with Saya getting attacked and going into shock happen. Although I hope to avoid having her go through with that harrowing experience... Anyway, Takashi was aiming to leave the school with Rei, so we could find him if we keep an eye on the front gate after teaming up with Saeko and Shizuka.)

With thought, I decided that the best next move is to arm Kohta. As right now I'm the only one that's actually doing any fighting, with Saya and Kohta either staying behind me or trying to find a place to hide, from blind corpses. Bad habits die hard I guess.

"We should go to the workshop class, it should have tools and materials that will let us reinforce what we have, or make something better, as I don't know how long this bat will hold if we keep going like this." I say while turning my head back looking at the two.

"There's one on the second floor." Saya speaks up as she pushes her glasses with her middle finger.

"Alright then, second floor for starters." I nod and turn to look forward again.

As we kept moving, I noticed a group of corpses huddled together at the end of the hallway. The sound of moaning, chewing and bones being snapped being audible in the otherwise silent hallway.

(I have three good reasons for why I don't want to go down that way, and one is making my own bones protest.)

I stop abruptly and raise my arm without looking back, my hand in a stop motion. But apparently I was not the only one that was not looking, as Kohta bumped into Saya's back.

"Watch it Fatso!"

Saya's voice rang like an alarm in my head...

"Shit." Was all I managed to say as I saw the whole group of corpses at the far end of the hallway get up.

I then looked behind us, to see that corpses that were following us were also closing in on us as well.

I didn't even have time to be mad at Kohta for not telling me that we were being followed. If we didn't act fast, we would end up surrounded, and there were way too many of them to fight off.

(The stairs are not too far, if we run we can make it there before the group in the front can cut us off.)

"Stairs, now." Is all I say as I start running. Taking the hint, the other two pick up speed and start running behind me.

(Good, we will make it to the stairs before they do, they are too far away.)

Right before we reached the staircase though, I saw a corpse walking out the corner that the stairs were located at, then another,

and another. And seconds later, corpses started pouring out of the staircase.

(Are you for real?!)

I stop running and bend my body backwards to balance out the momentum of my sprint, my boots slide across the floor for a bit before finally stopping.

Saya, not being able to stop as fast, ended up being in front of the group now as she stopped a few meters ahead of me. And... We were now surrounded.

"Do something!" Saya shouts without looking back.

(Too many of them to fight, and we can't evade them. Come on think, Think damn it!)

Kohta walked past me and stood next to Saya as he stared at the group of the approaching corpses.

"Why are there so many of them here?" Kohta asked as he kept looking at the now giant group that was slowly making its way to us.

"Instead of asking stupid questions, how about you start thinking of how we can get out of here?!" Saya puts her hands on her hips and turns to Kohta as she shouts. While that was happening, I was looking at what little 'free' space we had left as the corpses closed in from both directions...

My eyes then fell to a classroom door that was a few meters away from the larger group.

(We don't have much of a choice left do we?)

Idea in mind, I start running towards the large group while pointing at the door.

"Door, get to the door next to the large group, now!"

"That's not going to help, idiot! We'll just be trapped in there!" Saya shouts while following me.

"I got a plan." I say as I go to the class door, swing it open and look inside.

(Good, it's empty.)

"Inside, now." I turn to the two.

Saya lets out an annoyed sigh and runs inside, Kohta following behind her shortly after.

"Great, now what genius?" Saya then turns to me, her arms folded.

"... Now you stay quiet." I say as I slam the door shut before they can speak back.

With me still outside.

I looked to my right seeing the large group of shambling corpses was only a couple of meters away from me. The group on my left had fewer corpses and was still further away, but still too many to take head-on in such a closed off space.

They had also shambled past the door of the classroom that was next to the one I just left the other two in, so no dodging them that way. The only thing left between me and them was a corridor of concrete wall and some lockers on one side, and a windowed wall on the other.

(You had to try and act like a badass didn't you? Now, you'll die for it.)

I moved away from the door, where the two were hiding in, backing away from the large group until I was standing in the middle of the two groups.

(Too high to jump out of the window, too many to fight, and one of them will surely get me if I just stand still. I can't use the phone as a distraction either, that would pretty much kill Kohta and Saya by attracting everything here. Not that it matters, no matter where I'll throw the damn thing I'll still have corpses 'behind' me.)

Turning my head I saw that some corpses from the larger group are starting to bang on the door of the classroom that Saya and Kohta were in. The sound of their banging also caused the other corpses to start flocking outside the door.

"Oh for fuck sake!"

I shout as I run to the nearby set of lockers.

And kick them.

"Stay away from that fucking door shit for brains, I'm not fucking dead yet!" I scream as loud as I can while kicking the while I was pretty much committing suicide, I noticed that the lockers kept making small movements after each kick.

(They're not bolted down?)

I ran to the side of the lockers that were closer to the smaller group, grab the edge and put my foot in front of them so it can act as the fulcrum for the lockers, then push them to the right.

It felt like I was watching the lockers topple in slow motion... until. A loud crash.

Loud enough for the corpses that were banging at the door to stop, and turn towards me once again. But, the now toppled lockers gave me an idea.

I look behind me and see the small group that was still closing in on me. I then went behind the next set of lockers while still facing the

smaller group, and gave them a strong push, then kept on pushing until they were near the smaller group.

The screeching was actually loud enough to also make some of the corpses that were shambling next to the windows change their direction slightly towards the lockers.

I get in position to topple them over as well.

(I could just go to the other side of the wall and wait until most of them moved towards the lockers... but.)

I stared intensely as the corpses got closer.

(I got a better idea)

Once some of them have gotten close enough, I push the lockers to the left, making them fall over. Crushing a couple of corpses underneath them.

With the bodies under it, the lockers were now about shin-high on my side, and knee/thigh height on the other. After getting on the wobbling lockers, I look at what remained of the small group that was now slowly trying to get on the lockers.

(This could work.)

Bat in hand, I walk forward and take a swing with both hands at the first, and only corpse that managed to get on the lockers.

The corpse takes a spin and falls back, causing two other corpses to get struck under its falling body. Seeing the opening I grab the bat in a reverse grip and start running towards the small opening. Jumping off the lockers and over the corpses that were on the ground. The moment I landed, I eyed the last nearby corpses of the group to my right.

Not wasting time, I took a quick jump forward, rolling away from its extended hands. Turning back to look at all the chaos after I got back

on my feet.

(Ok, let's make sure they leave that door alone.)

Not wanting to take any chances, I head to a distant locker and topple it over as well, making sure that the two groups would wander away from the classroom and the staircase.

After watching them for some seconds and making sure that they had lost interest in the door, I turned around and ran. My face was sporting a shit-eating grin and I was feeling like a total badass, even if I didn't actually smash any heads in.

(My food better still be in one piece after that roll.)

After packing some distance from the group of corpses I spent some time checking the classrooms until I found an empty one, then headed inside so I could get my bearings...

I find a nearby chair, grab it and turn it towards the door before finally sitting on it. Then, I let out a huge sigh.

(Holy crap... I need to stop trying to act cool in front of pretty girls, lest I join the dead before my time.)

After taking a break for a couple of minutes, I start thinking about my current situation.

(So much for teaming up, now I'm by myself again. Still, Kohta and Saya should be fine, and since I gave them the idea about using tools to make or reinforce stuff, I can at least have high hopes that they will go to that classroom and Kohta can go commando mode.)

I then look outside the window.

(The sun is starting to set too. If I remember correctly, in the second episode where the sun was starting to set, the inside of the school's hallways were starting to get flooded with corpses. Meaning it will be much harder for me to move around as time goes by. Now the group

stays in the faculty room between episode two and three. But, I don't know for how long they really stay there, as both episodes are during sunset. I could try to go there and meet the whole group along the way.

Also, out of the two, I think at least Kohta will probably be worried about whether I survived or not. So he should at least mention me. Hmm Ok, for now, I should aim for the faculty room. Judging by the color of the sky, the rest of the group should be heading there soon too...)

After taking a needed break, I get up and head to the door, opening it slowly. Looking outside, I could see a couple more corpses shambling about, but nothing I couldn't sidestep over. So, Bat in hand, I exit the class and start heading towards the staircase in order to go on the second floor.

(I should check the class where Saya and Kohta were, doubt they are still there though. But I have to make sure.)

Setting my route so I end up by the staircase near the toppled lockers I start walking down the hallways. Going over the same path I used when I was searching for an empty classroom, I noticed that the corpses around here have increased in number as well.

(I was right about one thing it seems, as time passed, more and more corpses seem to be roaming the hallways. I want to get out of this fricking school... fast.)

Thankfully, I made it to the toppled lockers without finding the hallway clogged with brain munching corpses. The place was empty, with only a couple roaming corpses that seemed to be going off in their own direction. And the ones that ended up under the lockers, as I could see moving feet extending from under it.

I slowly walk past the downed lockers without touching them, not wanting to attract any attention, and make my way to the classroom door, to find it open.

(It has been opened, not broken, that's a good sign.)

Walking inside, I find it empty.

(No bodies, at least they didn't get killed here, meaning my diversion worked at least.)

I then looked outside, to see that the sky had started to take a heavy shade of yellow.

(Alright, let's head to the faculty room.)

I exit the class and head down the stairs to the second floor, heading towards my next destination.

The hallways of the second floor were in worse condition than the third, more guts, more blood, more corpses, more of everything really.

I move away from the staircase looking at the hallway in both directions.

(Not good... too many of them, I will have to go up and...)

I was about to move, when I heard a female scream coming out from the left hallway.

(That was Saya?...)

Reacting to the sound, a bunch of the corpses on the right hallway started going towards the left. In other words, towards me.

(Crap, I'm getting surrounded here, as much as I want to help, I got to head back up.)

I turn around and start running up the stairs. And almost ran into another student who was running down the stairs.

"WHOA! Too many of them!" The student exclaims with a loud voice.

"Yes and now you just attracted their attention, back up the stairs. Now." I say, as I run past the frozen student, a pair of running footsteps following behind me soon after...

I was wondering who the kid was as I ran up the stairs, I didn't seem to recall seeing him in the anime or manga. And, I found out the reason why once I reached the third floor once more.

A tall man was standing there. Striped suit, glasses and a face I instantly wanted to cave in.

(Shido.)

The sudden urge to just lunge at the guy right now, was pretty high. Knowing that he'll be responsible for a bunch of avoidable deaths, possibly including Saya's parents... It honestly made the prospect of destroying his knees, really tempting.

"Sir, there are too many of them downstairs, we can't go that way." The student who was running behind me finally climbed up the stairs and spoke up.

"I see. And, who might you be?" Shido turns his oily stare to me.

"Naier Sepfier." I was trying my best to not let my voice give away what I really wanted to do right now. Even if Shido is a bastard, which he undoubtedly is. If I attack him here, there will be multiple problems for me.

First being that all the students here will probably come after me. To them, Shido is helping them stay alive.

The second, and most important one, is that if Shido doesn't make it to the bus, then the main cast will not leave the bus later. Meaning they won't get to Rika's house, so they won't get the guns and

Humvee. And let me tell you, finding guns with actual stomping power in Japan, is like looking for Mew in Pokemon Yellow. Jokes aside, worst of all is that they might end up getting stuck in that giant traffic jam that will attract a whole battalion of corpses during the night.

"I see. You're the transfer student, I am Koichi Shido homeroom teacher of 3-A. You were quite fortunate to run into us, seeing as you are all by yourself" Shido smiles at me with his usual shit-eating grin plastered on his face.

(Fortunate, my ass.)

"Yes, surviving alone in a situation like this was not easy. Also, we should leave soon, the ones from the floor below us are climbing up the stairs as well." I answer as I walk away from the teacher, checking the two hallways to our left and right.

The right one was pretty much clogged, no way to go over there, so the only way to go was left.

"With the lower floor blocked we will have to find some other way. Come on everybody we will have to find another way out of the school." All the students gave a unified 'Yes sir' and followed Shido, who started going towards the left hallway.

Having no other options, I follow behind the group.

(God, I can't believe I'm stuck with this lunatic while The Group gets together right under me.)

"Hey, did you really survive all this time by yourself?" I turn my head to the voice to see the student I bumped into some minutes ago downstairs talking to me.

"Yes, and no. I was with two other people, Kohta Hirano and Saya Takagi, but we got separated." I answered back at the student who was walking next to me.

And then, I heard a snicker from the front part of the group.

"That fat ass? Ha, I'm surprised he's still alive, figured he would be the first one to die since he's like a patty with legs. But hey, he can probably become one hell of a bait, these things will be eating, for days" It was none other than Tsunoda who had opened his mouth. Several other male students next to him started snickering to his statement, his 'bros' if I had to guess.

Shido was doing nothing to stop him, obviously.

"Maybe you all should shut it for a bit, noise attracts them and right now you're all sounding like screaming donkeys"

In retrospect, that was a bad idea. I knew it was a bad idea. The whole planet knew it was a bad idea. But, I just couldn't resist...

My comment was followed by a sudden silence, the blond-haired guy turned to me, veins popping on his forehead.

"The fuck did you call me!?" He shouted, slamming his feet to the ground as he stomped towards me. Tsunoda got close enough to be in strike range, and apparently prepared to throw a punch towards my face.

(I should have said gorillas...)

I was about to take a stance so I could bring his face into a nearby wall the moment he tried to punch me. Yet instead of punching me, he punched the guy that was walking right next to me...

"Take this as a warning, funny guy. Next time, it will be you." Tsunoda glances at me, his scowl turning into a shit-eating grin as he turns around. Walking back to 'his' group like he just did the deed of the century.

(The hell?)

I turned to the guy that met the wrong end of Tsunoda's hand, his own hand now over his bleeding nose.

"Oi, Are you ok?" I ask as I extend my arm.

"No" Barks the student as he gets back up, slapping my arm away before walking away.

(Shitface is trying to make me an outcast? Good going Tsunoda, you just got a vip spot in my shit list, right next to your teacher)

"Now let's not start infighting everybody, we need to stay together"
Was all Shido said for the whole situation...

And after the little 'show', I was left walking by myself.

"There should be a second staircase here." After a couple of minutes, Shido spoke up.

Reaching the stairs he mentioned, I could see Shido turning to talk with Tsunoda.

"I will go check the stairs, can't let a wimp do a man's job" Tsunoda speaks up with a nod, and moves towards the stairs. His face turning into a grin as he gave me a quick glance.

Ignoring the provocation, I looked behind us to see the corpses that were slowly closing in on us, attracted by the group's idle chatter.

Tsunoda comes back after a bit, giving the all-clear, and the students start going down the stairs one by one.

While that was happening, I turned towards the guy who took the punch for me.

(I suppose he's not thinking straight after getting punched out of the blue, but is that guy crazy? Leaning against a closed door like that?)

"Hey man, you better get away from that door, you don't know what's on the other side."

"Piss off." The student hisses in a low voice.

"Look, just get away from the door." I responded to the guy who was now glaring at me.

"I said. Piss Off!" The guy now started shouting.

"I got punched in the face because of you! Why don't you mess up somebody else's life!" And He keeps on shouting.

"Just get away from that door, I think I see a shadow looming behind the glass." I answer to the guy in a cautious tone, trying to calm him down.

Yet... it did the complete opposite.

"Will you shut it! Door this, Door that! There is nothing behind this fucking door!" The student keeps shouting as he flings the door open in a blind rage.

Before I was even able to react, the shadow I mentioned lunged out. It grabbed the student and forced him on the ground. The guy's screams of anger quickly turned into screams of panic.

I acted as fast as I could, dropping my bat and taking out the screwdriver, stabbing the side of the corpse's head. But, I was too late.

I could see blood flowing under the student... and it was not from the corpse. He was bit.

I just stayed there on one knee, over the student while he was looking at me, tears appearing in his eyes...

I should have realized what was going to happen next. With Tsunoda making me look like an apparent passive wimp and Shido probably

thinking I was not worth being in his little herd because of that.

But, being focused on the dying student in front of me, I didn't even notice that my bat was not where I dropped it. I only realized something was terribly wrong as I felt a sharp pain in the back of my head, my whole body falling forward on top of the bleeding student.

My vision went blurry for a few seconds.

Shaking my head and opening my eyes to look straight ahead, I see a pair of bloody shoeless feet closing in on me, and the fallen student who was now just whimpering under me.

Turning my head around, my vision still slightly blurry, I see Shido dropping my bat and casually walking away.

(Shido... Shido you fucking good for nothing!... I'm going to fucking KILL YOU!)

Rage starts to heat up my head, I quickly pull myself on my knees and try to get up. Only to feel something holding my sleeve, looking down, I see the dying student looking at me.

"Man please, I didn't mean it, please. Don't leave me here, I don't want to die like this, don't want to. Please." He was stumbling on his words, blood was starting to come out from his mouth mixing with the tears that were running down his cheeks.

Seeing the student like that, made me snap out of my rage. I couldn't bring myself to leave him alone while he was looking like that. With the screwdriver still in hand, I grab the student by the collar, then take his arm and then yank him up.

"Thank..." His bloody smile after I helped him up, was short-lived however. As that pair of feet that I saw some moments ago were now beyond close. Before he could even manage to thank me, another corpse grabbed him from behind, biting him on the back of his neck

while pushing him forward on to me. And, he started to scream again.

Being in an awkward position after lifting the student up, I didn't manage to dodge the now falling student as the weight of two bodies fell on me. And I ended up on the ground with two bodies on top of me, only managing to put an arm between me and the student.

After hitting the floor, I heard the student's neck bones snap. I used my screwdriver to stab the head that had embedded it's teeth at the back of the student's neck. Looking at the student, I saw that he was no longer moving, screaming, or crying. Only his blood was now dripping on my face. He was dead.

I started panicking, realizing that he would soon be 'waking' up with me right under him. Add along the corpses that were still closing in.

I grabbed the head of the second corpse that had its teeth still embedded on the late student's neck and pulled the screwdriver from its head, right as the student started to twitch.

Among the twitching student on top of me, the approaching corpses, and my own mental state...

"Aaaarrhh! I am NOT dying here! NOT like this!"

I started screaming while stabbing the students head, pushing the two bodies away from me until I could put my foot between the bodies. Getting them off me with a kick while taking the screwdriver out of the dead students head in the process of freeing my trapped body.

I quickly roll away from the oncoming corpses using the momentum of my kick. I finish the backwards roll on my feet, stand up and run to my bat, grabbing it with my free hand. Then with a glance at the window, I see Takashi and the rest of his team getting on the bus.

The mere idea that I was going to be left behind because I was done in by Shido made my blood boil even more. I quickly put the screwdriver back in the side pocket of my bag and started jumping down the stairs until I was on the first floor.

Ignoring the corpses that infested the hallways, I just bolted through them. Whatever arm reached for me either found air, or didn't manage to get a grip on me.

While on the first floor, running through the hallway that linked to the exit, I looked through the windows and saw Shido casually walking towards the bus.

As I was nearing the exit, I was still going at full speed. Not having time to stop I used a corpse that had its back turned to me as a break. Smashing into it so that I could come to a stop, and allow me to change the direction of my sprint towards the exit.

The moment I saw the bus, the world around me blurred, the only thing I could see was the bus with Shido still a couple of meters away from the door.

I bend my body, grab my bat in reverse grip and break into a dead run, my feet stomping on the ground. The sound of moaning did not even reach my ears as I passed the corpses that turned their attention to me.

As I kept sprinting across the field I saw Shido slowly extending his arm towards the bus.

Realizing that he was about to get on the bus, and that they were going to leave without me...

(No, Not gonna happen. I will not be left behind because of that fucking bastard!)

Still sprinting, I take a deep breath and bellow out.

"MOOOVEEEE!"

My shout made the people in the bus turn their heads towards me. I would really like to see the expressions on certain people right now, but I was focused on my main target right now, Shido.

In all honesty, what I actually hoped for was for Shido to actually not 'move it' at all. What I hoped for, is that my shout would distract everybody in the bus so I could close in.

And well... I long since decided that I would not be stopping normally.

Shido, hearing my shout turned his face with a smirk, that quickly disappeared once he saw me, his face turning pale.

I could see the uproar on the bus. But the important part was, the plan worked. Shido was just standing there like an idiot. And the few seconds he failed to react was enough for me to reach the bus.

I jumped in, crashing right into Shidos lower abdomen, making him plummet backwards on the metal stairs and falling unconscious.

While that was definitely not enough to kill him, it did feel great to get back at the bastard.

Shaking my head, I look around me before getting up. I then toss my bat on an empty seat next to me before closing the bus door.

In the meantime, I heard Takashi shout.

"Miss Shizuka, Drive!"

Shizuka, who was just staring along with everybody else, snaps out of it and stomps on the pedal. I could hear her mumbling to herself as she went ham on the corpses in the school field, until she finally busted through the front door.

I was still standing on top of Shido while the bus was shaking, thinking of what to do.

(I could just start swinging at his face, bastard deserves it. But that would probably make the rest of the bus freak out on me, Rei excluded. They're probably already on edge with me after my entrance, so I shouldn't go all Hanibal on Shido... yet.)

While I was deep in thought I saw Shido waking up, his eyes slowly focusing on me as I was standing over him.

"My apologies Sir Shido, did not see you there. My vision was kinda blurry as something hit me on the back of my head some time ago" I say with a deadpan look on my face.

"I... it's alright, what is important is that you are safe. It is a teacher's job to keep you students safe after all." His face was still pale as he said that, rolls of sweat rolling down his forehead. He knew that I saw him.

He slowly got up. Straightening his suit before limping to the back of the school bus. And, he immediately started whispering to his little flock.

(The guy is already scheming? Damn, he bounces back fast. Whatever, I regret nothing and I'm feeling much better now.)

I walk towards the chair with my bat and leave my bag on it.

"Naier?" Hearing my name, I turn my head around. Following the direction of the sound I see Kohta, who was sitting on an outside seat, with Saya sitting next to him, staring outside.

"Hey. Told you I had a plan."

Saya turns her head to my statement shifting her eyes towards me as she opens her mouth.

(Oh god, even after I saved her ass she is going to dish me out?)

Yet, she said nothing. She just stared at me for a couple of seconds, before quickly turning her head back towards the window.

(That, was weird.)

I shrug and turn my attention back to Kohta.

"You're... ok?" He asks me with a worried expression.

"Uhh, I'm fine. Is there something on my face?" I start lightly patting my face before turning my head towards the rest of the group. Yet, everybody was just staring at me. Rei, Takashi, Saeko and even the students that were with Shido, although their expressions looked a bit more... fearful.

Standing there for a few seconds, and seeing that the expressions did not change, I pulled my phone out of my pocket. Opened it and used the front facing camera to look at my face on the screen.

Seeing my reflection, I realize why Shido's groupies looked like they're about to piss their pants.

All of my face is covered in blood and my clothes look like I just had a wrestling match with a bear, and lost.

(Well, I look like total shit.)

"Well, uhh."

I turn my head away from the phone and look around at the group.

"Is there a chance any of you got a wet handkerchief? I think I might have some blood on my face."

Going on a trip

You know what's apparently rare in a zombie outbreak? God damn handkerchiefs.

"Nothing? Nobody?" I raise my arms in disbelief after trying my best to straighten my clothes, in order to look less like a crazed ax murderer.

(Well, all of them just fled for their life with only the clothes on their back so I shouldn't be surprised.)

I turn around and start shuffling around in my bag.

(... I could just use the bandages to wipe my face.)

I grab a roll of bandage, unroll a bit of it and start cleaning my face of the still liquid blood.

I then take off my gloves, unwrap more of the bandage and start wrapping my hand with the clean part, until it's about halfway up to my forearm, where the bandage runs out. Locking the bandage with the clips it came with, I then proceeded to do the same to my other hand with the second roll, before putting my gloves back on.

Afterward, I took the swiss knife out and cut the bloody part of the bandage, then looked at the bloody piece in my hand.

(This is the blood of the first actual person I saw dying in front of me. I keep surprising myself with how calm I am with all of this.)

"Uhh Naier?" I turn towards the voice to see Kohta looking at my hands, along with the rest of the group.

"I know you said that you packed your bag for your part-time job. But, what exactly 'is' your part-time job? For you to need bandages and a swiss knife?" Kohta asks me while pointing at the swiss knife.

"I am interested to know as well. Those are quite an... interesting combination of items." I turned around to see that that question had come from Saeko.

I take a deep breath and try to look as serious as I can.

"My job is to make an example of people who do not want to cooperate with my boss." I respond with a deadpan look on my face.

As soon as the words left my mouth, silence. The whole group just stared at me.

...

And a couple of seconds later, my grim face cracked.

"Pppfft, heheh. Sorry, sorry my bad." I look down and shake my head with a slight chuckle as I put the swissknife back inside my bag.

The whole group relaxes after they see me chuckling, although their reactions differed quite a bit.

Kohta looked relieved, Takashi looked weirded out, Rei just had a blank stare, Saya went from a 'what' frown to a 'you are an idiot' frown, Saeko did not really react to the whole situation, she just slightly tilted her head sideways.

"They are more of a 'better safe than sorry' precaution" I awnser.

(Ugh, crap. Think Naier, what do you say now.)

The whole group just keeps staring at me.

"I help a friend of a 'friend' with his job. He sells hunting rifles, we go to the wilderness and I film him using the guns. Something like a promo video for the stuff he will later try to sell. We don't actually kill anything though."

(Huh, I just realized. I can lie through my teeth with a straight face. Should I be happy about that?)

The whole group just keeps staring.

"Oohh! That makes sense." Kohta was the first one to speak up.

"Wait? it does?" Takashi looks back to Kohta even more weirded out than before.

"Well I've met this 'friend' of his. So yeah, I could see that actually happening."

"Great, so now we have two gun nuts." Saya simply groans in response.

Ignoring Saya's unneeded remark, I thank Kohta in my head for pulling me out of the tight spot.

"I guess all of you have already heard it like twenty times by now, but the name's Naier Sepfier"

"Takashi Komuro" Takashi nods.

"I'm Rei Miyamoto." Rei speaks up after Takashi.

"Busujima Saeko, nice to meet you Sepfier. The teacher behind you is Miss Shizuka Marikawa." Saeko then continues after doing a slight bow.

"Ohh that's me, nice to meet you Serpfloffier, Serfoufier ughh Sepfofir..." Shizuka after hearing her name proceeds to apparently try to rename me to something more fluffy.

(If I say that I'm surprised, I would be lying... again.)

"Ehh... just Naier is fine, my Surname is quite the mouthful."

The group giggles silently while Shizuka pouts and silently keeps trying to get my surname right.

After we got over with greeting each other, I turned to Saya.

"So... what happened, are you alright?" I ask her.

"Huh, what do you mean?" she asks, slightly frowning.

"Well, after we split up I tried to find you two again but..." Before I could complete my sentence Saya butts in.

"We could not wait for you in that classroom, it was too dangerous." She says, while narrowing her eyes.

"Ehh that was not what I was going to ask... Was it you that screamed at the school on the second floor, near the faculty room at sunset?"

(Well I know it was her. But I figured that at least more interaction with her will make her less toxic towards me.)

She opens her eyes wide then quickly gets an angry frown

(Ooor not, figures that it was probably a bad subject... Definitely a bad subject to talk about. God I AM an idiot.)

"If you knew it was me then why didn't you come to help!" she 'asked' with a loud voice.

"I ran into some 'trouble'" I answered as I turned to look at the bloody bandage on my hand.

I then took a quick glance at the back of the bus.

Shido had long since recovered from his little 'accident' with the bus floor and was already yapping about the 'leader' business to everybody that could tolerate him. I.e. everybody not in the 'main' group.

"Wait, so you are the 'friend' Kohta was talking about?" Takashi asks.

I blink a few times before connecting the dots. And then I turn to Kohta.

"Please tell me you did not forget my name in all the panic and told them that you had a 'friend' that helped you?"

Kohta just laughs sheepishly and scratches his head. I just facepalm and groan.

"We tried to look for you but there were too many of them in the hallways for us to search efficiently." Saeko speaks up.

"It's alright, it worked out in the end. " I sigh and decide to not dig into the subject any further.

(If they don't care enough to look for me, then I'll just have to get closer to them until they'll do.)

"Speaking of it... What happened to you Sepfier ? You looked really awful when you got on the bus." Saeko asks me right after.

I turn my sight to Shido's little flock before answering.

"I'll tell you all when the time's right. And now it's not, trust me." Saeko follows my eyesight, looks at Shido, then back at me, and nods.

The rest of the group, seeing Saeko agree to wait, decided to not press on the matter either.

"Well, we were off to a rough start, but I hope we'll get along now." I say, folding my arms with a nod, looking at the group as they nod back at me. Except for Saya, she just stared out of the window.

(Alright, let's not forget what's to come. Got to figure out where we are right now.)

I headed back to my seat and put the bag on the chair by the window so I could sit on the chair that was easier to get up from. Comfortable with my seating, I take my map out of the bag.

"Miss Marikawa, could you please tell me where are we right now?"

I ask Shizuka while looking at the map. She turns her head slightly.

"Hmm... I think we just passed a sign saying that we passed block 10-58 of the Kawashimo neighborhood." She answers as she glances around the front windshield.

"Hmm, I see. Thank you." I respond and return to my map.

(I need to figure where Shido will pull his little stunt, so I can plan a route for when we get split up. As I can't just run after Rei and drag her back by force if she jumps out. That would give everybody a very bad impression of me. And seeing that even Takashi could not convince her, there's a good chance that we'll end up splitting up. If I can't figure a good way to prevent the whole thing from happening at least. But knowing Shido's character and Rei's history with him, nigh impossible I say.)

Looking at the map, I pinpoint the bus's location and then look at the nearest bridges drawn on the map.

(Hmm. The city is actually three giant landmasses linked by bridges, and is surrounded by the sea at one end, much like Poseidon's spear. Right now we are at the rightmost 'island', with the closest police station, that I suspect Takashi mentions they should 'meet up' at, being the central landmass. Meaning that if we were to use the original meeting place, we'll need to pass the bridge to get there, and most of the bridges will be clogged with cars, or blocked off by cops.

In the anime Takashi reunites with the group by finding them on a blocked bridge by sheer dumb luck. Not something I want to count on right now. I will try to figure where Shido will make his move, and

then find the nearest location we could meet up, like a park or even a bridge itself.)

Deciding to take a small break, I fold the map back and look at the bloody bandage that I still had on my hand.

(I'm still a bit weirded out that I'm not even shaken by that whole thing with the dead student... But I shouldn't look a gift horse in the mouth. If I was freaking out right now, it would not do me any good.)

I then leave the bloody bandage on the metal handle in front of me.

(Rest in peace. That's all I can offer you.)

I close my eyes and decide to rest a little. With my eyes closed, all I could hear was the engine of the bus, and silent whispering.

Until some minutes later, I hear footsteps closing in to me.

"Hey, umm, Naier."

Opening my eyes, I turn my head and see Kohta sitting on one of the two chairs by my right.

"Hey, what's up." I answer nonchalantly.

"Look, I just want to... uhh, apologize for not looking hard enough and almost leaving you behind" Kohta kept his head down while he said this. Well, I had already decided to let the whole thing slide. But, the fact that Kohta was still worrying about it, was enough for me.

"It's cool, the fact that you're still bothered about it is enough. It means you cared. So seriously, stop worrying about it, now." I looked at Kohta, who still seemed to be down in the dumps. And figured it was time to take a different approach.

"By the way, nice SMG. Where did you get it? It kind of looks like a retarded vector." I say, pointing at the nail gun as I finish my sentence with a chuckle.

"Huh, a vector?" He looks at the nail gun for a bit.

"You're right, it does look like one. It actually weighs about as much as an old assault rifle, so I never thought of it as an smg. Heh, wish it had the rate of fire and recoil of a vector though."

Getting an idea in my head, I smirk.

"Well I hope you did not name it yet, because as of now, I dub it R-ector. Standing in for... Retarded Vector."

He snaps his face to me.

"What?! Don't go off giving my gun weird names." Kohta hugs his nail gun and turns his upper body away as if protecting it from me.

"Ok, I won't. If you stop bothering yourself about what happened at the school." I say and fold my arms leaning back on my seat.

He looks at me and sighs, and then finally laughs.

"Fine fine, I get it. Thanks Naier." I give him a two-finger salute as he gets up and walks back to his seat.

(I really want to turn back and shout 'You take good care of R-ector now', but he might end up feeling that I'm having fun at his expense. That guy loves his guns after all.)

Deciding that was enough of a break, I take the map out once more and continue from where I left off...

About ten minutes later, I was still looking at the map. We were now driving near the seaside. The bus mostly quiet... I wish. As Tsunoda and his hangers-on, had started causing a racket.

(It will happen soon. I got our location down, so I should start looking around for a place to meet up later.)

Scanning the map, I found a park that was near one of the smaller bridges and relatively close to our position.

(This could work, it's still on the same landmass and the bridge there seems to be small, so there's a chance it won't be clogged or blocked.)

Just as I finished my thought, I'm jerked forward as the bus suddenly stops. Shizuka then took off her seat belt and turned around.

"I can't drive with all this yelling!"

Tsunoda freezes for a moment, before he starts shouting again. About stuff I really didn't care to listen about, something about having component people in the team or some crap?.

"Then what do you wish to do?" Saeko asks right after Shizuka, as she turns to look at Tsunoda.

(Holy deja vu. Didn't realize it, but I haven't seen them speak the lines they said in the anime up till now. I am REALLY weirded out right now.)

"I can't stand him!" Tsunoda shouts pointing at... Me?

(Wait wha...?)

"I cannot stand that wimp! Why do we have to bring that dead weight with us!" Tsunoda keeps shouting.

This time, it seemed more natural that Kohta wanted to act. We're supposed to be friends after all. Only to again be stopped by Saya.

(Did I just switch roles with Takashi? Whatever, this ass is mostly responsible for what happened back at the school. This time, he won't walk away with it...)

I slowly got up, my bat sliding off the chair as it was hanging on my left hand, I tilt my head slightly.

"Be careful when you use that word. Donkey."

Tsunoda, losing whatever little restraint he had left, screams and charges towards me. Blind rage was all he had as he sprinted towards me.

I was about to thrust my bat forward towards his chest as he blindly rushed towards me. Yet, for some reason, he tripped. Causing him to awkwardly flail about as he tried to regain his balance.

Not losing the chance, I released my grip on my bat, letting it fall on the floor as I ran up to Tsunoda, grabbing him by the collar with both hands and lifting his face to me.

(A wimp huh?)

Was the only thought that passed my head as I smashed my forehead into his nose with all my strength. The impact caused him to stop struggling and put his hands on his now bleeding nose.

I then move one of my legs behind his own leg, take my hands off his collar and quickly bend my upper body and slam my shoulder into him, causing him to trip on my leg and fall down.

Feeling that it was not enough punishment, I kneel down.

With one knee on his arm, I grabbed his second arm with my hand and yanked it towards me so I won't end up with a surprise punch to the face.

"The last guy who died near me also ended up with a broken nose. You're filling that role perfectly so far. Be glad I decided not to use the bloodstained bat on your sorry face to test whether infected blood can transmit the disease. But, next time you try to cause trouble for me. I will pass your face through the bus floor before testing exactly that. Take this as a warning."

I release Tsunoda and start walking back to my seat, only to hear clapping.

(I'm starting to get pissed with this charade.)

"Splendid work Sepfier, you certainly know how to hold yourself in a fight. But this only proves what I was saying. We need a leader. Somebody who can stop avoidable conflicts like these."

Shido proceeds to start yapping about how he will stop conflicts and keep everybody safe. All the good shit and all. Causing the students on the back row to start clapping. He then ends his speech with a bow and a shit-eating grin.

"It looks like it has been decided. I am now the leader of this group by the majority of votes."

Feeling rather sarcastic, and probably because of all the adrenaline I had in my veins after my little scuffle with Donkey boy, I started clapping right after Shido finished his speech. Although my expression made it clear that I did not buy a single thing he said.

"Bravo, Cheers, High-five, Sllloow Clap. Somebody give that man and his little donkey an Oscar. All that acting was top-notch. If you think we are total fucking idiots. Create a problem and then act as if you solved it, almost like a stinking politician."

Shido's face actually distorted a little when I mentioned the politician part.

(Out of the whole thing, this got him? Guess he really hates his dad huh.)

Yet he quickly regains his composure.

"I do not know what you are talking about Sepfier, if you don't like being under my leadership. You are free to leave" Shido responds with a smirk.

As if expecting this, Rei jumps off the bus and starts stomping towards the nearby tunnel.

(Well, in the heat of the moment I forgot my actual target. Rei just jumped out, in other words, I fucked up.)

Takashi then gets off the bus, and runs to Rei. much to Saya's dismay. Yet as I'm about to walk off the bus as well, I'm stopped. My arm gets grabbed by Saeko.

"This is between the two of them," Saeko calmly shakes her head at me.

I just stared at Saeko, before shifting my focus behind her. Raising my arm and pointing at the incoming giant bus.

"And they are about to get violently interrupted." I respond with the same calm tone, causing her to turn her head to where I was pointing at. Her eyes then opened wide.

Saeko then shouts at Shizuka who just, reacts to her name, fidgets about and then just turns her head towards the oncoming lights and stays rooted to the spot.

(Is she a goddamn deer...)

Not that I was any better, as I just stood there as well and watched as the oncoming bus slammed into a car. It then did a whole flip in the air and crashed where Rei and Takashi were standing some moments ago. The wreckage is now blocking the tunnel and catching on fire in the process.

I'm jerked back to action as I realize that Saeko just ran past me. I ran behind her, my mind still processing what I just saw.

(Can a bus actually do a frigging flip like that?)

Reaching the bus I see flaming corpses coming out the wreckage. Getting near Saeko, I hear Takashi shouting.

"To the police station!"

Before Saeko can speak, I shout back.

"No, the closest police station is still too far! It's over the bridge and with the panic we don't know if the bridges will be passable! We need a location on this landmass!" I shouted back.

"Where then!?" Takashi shouts back at me.

"There is a giant park, Marui Shigemi, east of here, near one of the smaller bridges that connect to the central landmass! We can meet up there either today or tomorrow at seven! If the place is overrun, then head towards the bridge and wait either on it or under it!" I shout out.

Takashi nods at me through the opening in the burning wreckage, then turns his back and starts running with Rei.

I look back at the corpses that had closed in, Saeko was readying her bokken, only for the corpses to collapse from the damage the fire was doing to them.

"I'm not in the mood for smoked bacon today. Let's go Busijima, this crash is bound to attract every single corpse that was shambling around here." I say as I start moving towards our bus, Saeko nods and follows behind me.

"Good thinking back there by the way." Saeko tells me as we run back to the bus. I just looked at her and nodded.

Getting on the bus, Saeko shouts at Shizuka that we need to change route, with Shizuka nodding and turning the bus around.

I look at my seat, seeing Kohta sitting by my bag.

"Did something happen?" I ask. He turns his sight to Shido's group.

(Of course, I openly antagonized Shido a moment ago. Now I'm going to be targeted by Shido and his merry midgets. Ughh being stuck on this bus is going to suck.)

"I see, thanks for keeping a lookout buddy." I turn my head back to Kohta.

"Don't mention it, just watch your back in here Naier." Kohta says as he gets up.

After Kohta left, I sat on my chair and checked my equipment, making sure that everything was still in place.

(I wonder who tripped Tsounoda back then. He might be a donkey, but I don't think he's retarded enough to trip on his own two feet. Or well, he might be.)

The bailout

Do you know how it feels when the Tv is on, and there's a random chump talking nonstop, yet the only thing you hear is static?

That would be the perfect example of what is going on with me right now.

Shido, after being 'elected' leader, has been on a killing spree. He won't shut his goddamn mouth up, not even for a minute. And to add even more fuel to this retarded flame, his group is now giving me the stink eye, while Shido keeps trying to fan the flames.

"We must protect ourselves from whatever threat will try to tear us apart. Monsters! Do not always look like monsters. We need to act like a group, help each other, and weed out the ones that would try to harm us." Shido kept on spouting shit, while the idiots on the back with mouths agape were looking at him like they just met a god-damn superhero.

(Luckily for me we are stuck in traffic. Otherwise, they would probably try to throw me out in the first group of corpses they could see. So I could just let the whole thing play out as it did in the anime. But the idea of staying in this bus with Shido and his group of lunatics any longer is a big no no.)

I then turn my attention back to the map.

(After getting away from the crashed bus, it didn't take us too long to get stuck in traffic. Even if we were not trying to go over the bridge this time around, we still ended up funneled here. As most roads were not in a condition for the bus to pass through in order for us to go where we wanted to. Being it, crashed cars or police blockades, we ended up forced to come here along with every other escaping citizen and their cars.)

I turn my head away from the map and look outside.

"Miss Marikawa, I don't think we'll be able to change routes like this. All the exits are blocked and the only way to go is towards the bridge. And by the speed we're going now, we won't be over that bridge even by tomorrow noon." I say to Shizuka before turning my head back to the map.

Shizuka herself was pretty much falling asleep on the wheel as I spoke up. She sighs before taking her hands off the steering wheel, stretching her body.

"And it's not even night yet." She complained lazily.

(That's not the problem here you natural blond. I need to figure out a way to make 'my' group bail the bus. I'm NOT spending my night right next to the Shidobear. There's also something else I want to do, and if I can do it during or right before night time, all the better. So, guess it is time to try and persuade my new friends.)

I get off my seat and walk up to Kohta and Saya. Both of them turned their heads to me, Saeko who was only a seat away also turned to look at me.

"I think now it's a good time I tell you all why I looked like total crap when I got on the bus." Turning my sight to Saeko she nodded and leaned towards my direction. I motion with my head for them to come to the front of the bus.

"Not here. Also, do not come all at once. That would turn Shido's attention to us, I don't need to deal with his crap right now."

I head back to my chair and start packing my stuff. One by one, the rest of the group walked to the front of the bus and took a seat close to me.

Thankfully, Shido was too busy drowning in the admiration of his fans to realize that all four of us had gathered in the front of the bus.

"So what happened?" Saeko asks.

"Shido happened, while we were still inside the school." I say as I turn my sight to the back of the bus.

"You met with Shido before you decided to ram into him?" Saya asks as she tilts her head and raises an eyebrow.

"Yes... and the slimy bastard tried to kill me." I respond as I fold my arms.

Other than Shizuka the rest of the group, while they did react somewhat to my statement. They didn't look 'that' surprised? I guess Shido's reputation precedes him.

"Naier, are you one hundred percent sure he actually tried to do such a thing? While I do admit that I don't like mister Shido too much, and his reputation with the staff isn't exactly the best... maybe you just misunderstood something?"

Shizuka spoke with surprise and some disbelief written all over her face.

I sigh as I shake my head slightly.

"While I was 'stuck' with his group, we got attacked. A student in his group got bit while we were trying to find a way out of the school. I should've known better than to turn my back on that snake. But that's what I did, and he in turn tried to knock me out... or just kill me outright with my own bat while I was trying to help the fallen student. I'm lucky that he swings like a retard, otherwise I'd probably not be here right now."

Shizuka had her hands over her mouth now, guess there's not much to misunderstand in my story now.

"So this leads us to right now. With the speed we're going right now, we'll never reach the park. Whatsmore, most roads seem to be

blocked by cop cars or overall be in a very sorry state. I don't think we'll reach the meeting place anytime soon if we stay in the bus. I can also bet whatever sanity I have left, that Shido will only become more unreasonable in his actions as time goes by. He's given some power, and he's already drowning in it."

After that, the group stayed silent for some time, until.

"You are right about the park, we will never make it like this." Saeko looked out the window as she spoke up.

"But what should we do then? Would you rather go on foot?" She asks as she turns to look at me

(Thank you, my dear sadistic samurai.)

I smile slightly.

"Yes, I would rather, and will go on foot. Hell knows I'm not spending my night here with mister 'leader' around. And the more time I waste on this bus the less time I will have to find a place that is safe to stay in for the upcoming night."

(Truth be told though, I don't even want to think how it would be to pass a night alone while being surrounded on all sides by walking corpses. That is some frigging nightmare fuel right there.)

"We." Saeko cuts in while I was thinking.

"Uhhh 'we'?" I tilt my head.

"Yes we, I agree that staying here won't do us any good. So I think that we should leave the bus as well." Saeko turns to the other two as she finishes speaking.

"Yea, I would rather take my chances out there as well." Kohta adds up after Saeko.

"It's decided then, we're leaving." Saya seals the deal as we all nod together.

Before we get up from our seats we hear a meek voice coming from the driver seat.

"Ummm, can I come too? I do not want to be left all alone here with Mister Shido." I turn to the front to see Shizuka staring at us. I smile and give her a thumbs up. She claps her hands together and with a smile, she pulls the handbrake before getting up.

I was about to fully secure my bag, when the commotion we made finally attracted Shido's attention, causing him to turn his attention to the front of the bus.

"Is there something wrong? As a group we need to stay together. If there's something to be said, all of us should hear it, secrets can lead to infighting after all. And for that reason, as your leader, I believe we should not be keeping secrets from one another don't you agree?"

He spreads his arms like the sun just shone out from his ass after finishing his pompous as fuck speech, his groupies clapping behind him, blinded by his glorious assshine.

(God, are those idiots going to clap at everything he says?)

"Thanks but no thanks Shido, we have our own agenda. We got no reason to stay here with you." Saya answers with a sharp tone. Shido's grin then, gets even wider.

"Well Takagi, this is a free country after all, you can do as you wish. But."

Shido then starts licking his lips..

(What the hell... I really, Really want to deck his face right now.)

"Miss Marikawa stays behind. It would be really bad if we lost our driver and medic in our current situation."

Shido then started walking towards us...

(What's that idiot doing? Does he really expect that 'he' will be able to intimidate us after we literally just dealt with fucking zombies? Maybe I should just indeed deck... No, wait, I remember this scene.)

Knowing what was coming next, I passed my bag over my shoulder and then walked backwards, until I felt the steering wheel with my hands. And then...

I heard the air being ripped. Kohta had just fired his nail-gun.

(Ok, this is my chance.)

While Kohta was keeping Shido occupied, I ignored the scene in front of me and turned my sight to the bus's steering wheel, looking for the keys.

And the moment Kohta started shouting, I turned the engine off, hoping that everybody was too focused on Kohta to realize that the bus had gone silent.

"Busujima, exit first, I'll guard the rear!" I hear Kohta shout.

(Alright, it's time to leave.)

I take the keys off and pocket them.

"You have proven you are a man, Kohta." Saeko speaks up, smiling at Kohta before getting off the bus, followed by Saya and Shizuka. With only me and Kohta left in the bus now, I speak up.

"Let's go Kohta. The only thing these guys are going to be good for now. Is live bait" I say with a smirk on my face while staring at Tsunoda.

Kohta nods, and without taking his eyes off Shido, he starts walking backwards towards the door. His nail-gun pointed at Shido the whole time.

The moment Kohta got off, I started walking towards the stairs, staring at the stripped suited worm the whole time. My mouth then curved up to a smirk.

"Next time I see you" I stop smirking mid-sentence.

"I will feed you and your little parade to the corpses. Hope you like walking."

I get off the bus, slam the door and start running towards the group.

(If all goes well, this is going to be the last time I see Shido and his cult. Huh, Here's to wishful thinking.)

After reaching the group that was now waiting for Kohta to catch his breath, I slowed down and walked up next to them.

"That could have gone a lot worse, good job." I say as I lightly tap Kohta on the back.

"Th... thanks." Kohta tried to speak as he took deep breaths, hands on his knees.

Saya, upon hearing my voice, turns to look at me and folds her arms.

(Ohhh boi, toxic projectile incoming.)

"Well, we're now on foot with no protection, now what?"

(Wait, she is not throwing any toxic waste at me? I call this 'progress'..)

Following Saya's question, I take off my bag and pull out the map.

"Now, we become tourists." I say as I wave the map.

"Huh!?" Saya frowns loudly.

"I don't know this part of town very well. So we'll have to use the map to figure out where we are and where we need to go." I say while looking at a road sign, so I could pinpoint our current location.

"We're still in a police protected location, so we should be relatively safe from any surprise attacks by corpses. Though if we somehow 'are' caught by surprise in this packed location, it won't end well for us." Finishing my explanation I returned my attention back to the map.

A couple of minutes later the whole group had formed a circle around me.

"There are multiple roads we can take that lead to the park, our meeting location." Saya speaks up first.

"Yes but we first need to find a way out of the evacuation route, or at least the area secured by the police." Saeko adds.

"The Police have already blocked most of the roads though." Kohta continues.

"So we have to backtrack until we find an opening to the cordon and then go from there." I continued after Kohta.

"The further away we go from the bridge the easier it will be to find an open road to slip through... so I think your logic stands." Saeko finishes before we all nod to each other and get ready to start walking.

As the group started walking. I began to dig my hand in my pocket, and then took out the bus keys. I then lifted my hand in front of my face with the keys dangling under my fingers.

"Wait, are those... the bus keys?" Shizuka, who was next to me, points at the keys as she keeps blinking, her eyes wide open.

"Yiap." I answer while looking at the keys.

The rest of the group then turns to me

"You stole, the bus keys?" Saya asks incredulously, but I could see a slight smirk on her face nonetheless.

"Yiap" I replied once more, still looking at the keys as they glittered in the sunset.

"When did you even... ?"

"When you shot at Shido." I cut off Kohta as I keep looking at the keys.

I spin the keys on my finger before throwing them to my left. Over a makeshift fence that blocked off a rather dark alleyway.

"They wanted to throw their weight around, it's about time they lose some by walking." I say with a shrug before I start moving forward.

"That joke was awful." Saya rolls her eyes as she shakes her head, though she was, smiling.

"Ehh." I shrug as I keep walking.

(Bad joke or not, the whole thing did put a smile on the whole group, so it was worth it. And to add to that, with no bus, there is a chance that Takagi's house will not fall. Two birds, one stone.)

We decided to go from a different path down the road, so we wouldn't end up returning to the bus. And other than the occasional cop telling us that we should be going in the opposite direction, nobody really tried to stop us.

And as we kept going, I could slowly see fewer and fewer people around. In the end, it didn't take too long for us to move away from the mass of escaping citizens.

"I have stopped seeing the police for some time now." Kohta says as he looks around the road we were on.

"Most of them are probably concentrated near the bridge and along the main roads leading there. But this also means that there should be an opening for us soon. And corpses are going to become a threat again." I say as I keep walking.

And, I was right. It did not take too long after that for us to start seeing corpses that were headed towards the bridge, along with several unbarricaded roads.

"It seems we can change directions from here and start going towards the park." Saya speaks up.

"Alright. Thing is, we can't walk through corpse infested streets like we're going for a picnic. We need to change our positions. Takagi and Miss Marikawa, both of you stay in the center of the group. Uhhh, Kohta you can take the back. You have limited ammo so you shouldn't waste it on corpses that are no threat to us, fire only if they have a chance to surround us, okay? Busujima, I trust that you don't have a problem being on the front?"

"Remind me who made you leader again, that you can order me around?" Saya butts in before Saeko can respond, the glare on her eyes ever so obvious.

(Of course, if it's not Takashi ordering her around then she gets like this... uhhh, I want protagonist privileges. Or at least a Takashi ray.)

Just as I was about to open my mouth.

"Takagi, Sepfier is right. We can't move around carelessly now, what if we get ambushed and you are the one in the front or back, can you fight in close quarters?" Saeko speaks up

Saya just glares at Saeko before turning her head away and going to the center of the group, obviously annoyed.

"And I'm nobody's leader Takagi. Mostly because I don't want to be responsible for other people's lives. I'm just trying to figure out the best way to keep us alive... All of us."

With that, I positioned myself behind Saeko.

"With that said, I'll be checking the map to scout different routes while we're on the move, in case we find a dead end. But you can count me in, in case things go south. "

Saeko answers me with a nod.

"Alright everybody, lets gooo!" Shizuka pumps her fist in the air while trying to make an... angry? expression...

(Aaaand the tension just dropped to zero.)

"Alright everybody, noise to the minimum from now on." After saying that, I turn my attention to the map and we start walking down the corpse infested streets...

(Ok, focus. No pressure, I'm just responsible for our route, what's the worst that can happen? Drive us headfirst into a dead end with a horde on our tail?... Me, you're horrible at pep talks)

Walking down the street, I simultaneously kept an eye on the map and to the front, while Saeko dealt with any corpses that got too close by going all ninja on their ass. Which was mostly her sliding behind them and cracking their collarbones/heads with a sideways slash.

(Damn... she's as good as shown in the anime. Gotta have to ask her to teach me how to do that.)

Reaching the first intersection, we find our initial planned route blocked. Crashed cars had pretty much cut off the road we wanted to take.

Saeko stops and turns to me.

I nod and look around the road we're on, along with our position in the map. The park is to the northeast, in other words, we need to go straight and then left. The most direct route to it, being going east, which was straight ahead, was blocked. So we could only go left to the north or, take a detour and go right to the south.

Problem is, the road leading North had a truck blocking most of the road, leaving either a small space to squeeze through or forcing us to go under it. Saeko turns to me and points at the North road and I negatively shake my head, pointing to the southern one.

"Too risky, too large of a chance that we'll get trapped." I whisper to her. She nods and turns back around. Then we take a right turn and head down the road.

The corpses here did not even notice us. Most of em' were either clustered in one side of the road or were shambling towards the loudest nearby sound, that usually being a running car engine. Thanks to that, we reached the next intersection with no problems. And once more, Saeko stopped and turned to me for directions.

This time we did not have much of a choice, we needed to go left or we would be moving even farther away from the park. Thing is, the corpses on that road were moving towards us, or towards our direction at least. Even so, we start heading towards that road after I point Saeko to our left. Thankfully, the road didn't have many corpses so we could somewhat safely pass through. The only real problem was that they were scattered around in the street and not gathered on one side like in the last road. Nothing that Saeko couldn't handle though.

Once we safely passed the corpses and reached the next intersection it was my turn once more.

(We are doing pretty well on staying undetected so far, but something is bothering me.)

I lift my head from the map and look behind Saeko, who was looking at me, to the road ahead.

(The road ahead seemed to have progressively more corpses the further I see, all walking towards us. Towards the west.)

I then walked to the middle of the intersection with Saeko following close behind me and looked at the two other roads.

(The corpses that are on the left and right part of the intersection have both crowded onto one side of the road. If the walls were not there, they would be heading west too.)

I then walk back to the group.

"There is something important we need to check. " I speak up to the group.

"Is there a problem?" Kohta asks.

"We need to go straight, but I'm getting some really bad vibes with how all the corpses are actually shambling towards us when we try to go on the road that heads east." I say as I point at the road ahead of us.

"Yea on the road we passed by, had all of them gathered on one side, wonder why?" Kohta scratches his head...

And after a few seconds of silence...

"... The mass of civilians on the bridge!" Saya suddenly speaks up, as if receiving an epiphany.

(Shit, she's right. How could I frigging forget that? The noise produced from all the annoyed drivers honking their horns, plus the cops that were using megaphones or opened fire at the stray oncoming corpses. And you have yourself one loud ass dinnerbell.)

"They are all being attracted towards the commotion the people are making back there. With the rest of the island's source of noise not being so strong. The bridge, with such a large number of people and vehicles, is one of the loudest sources of sound left." Saya says calmly while folding her arms.

I take a deep breath as I internalize the really, REALLY bad news.

"Ok... we will head straight, for now. But be ready to fall back if things get out of control." I say as I point at the road ahead, before focusing on the map again.

The group nods, and we start moving straight ahead, through another group of corpses.

It sadly also didn't take too long to verify that the corpses only increased in number as we started going down that road.

So much so, that I decided to put my 'class' on hold. As I turned around and gave the map to Shizuka, then took the bat out from the side straps of my bag.

(I can see even more of them coming, we need to get off this street fast. Can't waste time being sneaky about it.)

"We can't waste time on this road. We'll run down the road, after we reach the intersection, we'll go left, the corpses should hypothetically be all clogged to one side of the road there. Kohta, keep an eye for any corpses that might surround us." I finished speaking and moved next to Saeko.

"I can see even more of them shambling our way, we need to get off this street fast. We are going to take the right part of the street as it has less of them and carve a road. Kill em' or knock them down, whatever floats your boat. As long as they are disabled or at least unable to grab the ones running behind us, do whatever you want. I got your back on this one" I say, turning my head to Saeko.

She doesn't even take her eyes off the incoming corpses as she nods... and smirks.

(Oh, sadist alert.)

With a silent dash, Saeko ran forward to the nearest corpse. I start sprinting, not far behind her.

(They are not clogged together so we should be able to make a path.)

Saeko ignores the first one in front of her and goes for the second nearest corpse. Landing her bokken right on its head, the corpse collapses on the spot. The sound of the body hitting the ground causing the corpses around her to turn their attention towards her. Which in turn caused the corpse that she ignored to turn its back to me.

Not wasting time, I run behind the corpse. And before it could turn around, the side of its head met the wrong end of my bat, sending the corpse in a violent trajectory towards the floor to my left.

Saeko takes a quick glance at me before she then again charges to a distant lone corpse on her right.

Repeating the process, I ran towards the closest corpse to the left as they started to turn towards Saeko. I close in to the nearest one and swing smack-dab on the thing's mouth, the impact causes the corpse to stumble backwards and fall while its teeth went flying left and right. The corpse next to it did not manage to get too far either, as it got a nail on the face before it could even get close to me.

With these corpses out of the way, there were only two of them left blocking our way.

I saw Saeko running towards the one on the right so I, again, went after the one on the left. Right as Saeko closed in and swung down

on the right one's head, I charged into the left one, taking a running swing at its head.

As both corpses fell, I took a quick look behind me to see the rest of the group running, following our path religiously.

With the way now looking clear enough for a straight run, the whole group dashed past the stumbling corpses, making it to the middle of the intersection.

Looking to my left, I see that that the road had indeed corpses that were all gathered on one side. Theory confirmed, I continued running to that road until I was out of the intersection that had us face the corpses head-on. After we all made it out of that street, I turned to the group and made the universal gesture for 'silence' with my hand, then started walking down the road. Picking up distance from whatever corpse might have heard us.

Once we were relatively away from any corpse that caught a whiff of us, I stopped walking and took a few deep breaths.

Shizuka comes up next to me and extends her arm, the map in her hand. I nod and take my map back. Looking at it, I put my finger on the intersection we were now on.

(All of this, just to move two blocks towards the correct direction...)

I take my eyes off the map and look at the sky.

(And it's starting to get dark. All the while, we still have like fourteen blocks to go.)

I turned my sight back to the map as we started moving down the road, towards the next intersection.

Reaching the next turn was pretty easy this time around, with all the corpses being on one side once more. Once there, I turned to look to my right.

And...

"You gotta be joking" I slightly dropped my shoulder as I stared at what lay ahead.

"Too... many" Kohta speaks up after me.

The rest of the group just stared.

Many, was an understatement. A thousand might also be an understatement too.

The road ahead was not just clogged, It looked like a sea of walking corpses.

All walking towards, Us.

"We need to find a place to hide by the wayside. Right fucking now." I say, as I turn to the group.

"One of the houses nearby?" Kohta asks.

"A house won't do, too large of a chance that it'll be locked. Furthermore, we don't have the time to check each house with 'that' approaching." Saya answers to Kohta, pointing at the horde coming towards our direction.

"Then what do we do?" Kohta asks again.

Saya clenched her fists and lowered her head, her eyebrow twitching.

(Seriously? Is she going to start shouting here? NOW?!) I darted my head around, looking for a place we could hide.

"The store, we can go to that store. Stay on the top floor and just barricade the stairs" I say pointing my arm towards a two-story sports store that was near the corner of the street.

"That store has walls made of glass. You do understand how risky it is to stay there, right?" Saeko adds after me.

"I'm open to suggestions. I would stay on a roof right now if need be." I say back to Saeko in a joking manner.

"That might not be a bad idea actually." Saeko responds, causing me to raise my eyebrow.

"Yeah if you want to freeze to death." I say as an answer to that statement.

"OH, oh! I know! If we stick close together we won't be cold." Shizuka pops in and says something ridiculous with a beaming face.

Causing Kohta to have the oh so famous nosebleed after he started staring at Saya. Something which she answered by punching Kohta in the face before turning her face to me. Only to realize that I was also looking at her.

"What! You want one too?!" Saya puts her hands on her hips and leans her upper body towards me.

Trying to keep a poker face, I speak up.

"No time left... To the sports store it is." I start running towards the store without waiting for the rest. Saeko giggles as she runs behind me, Saya following Saeko while she kept on fuming, Kohta following with a stupid expression of bliss on his face and Shizuka with her finger on her mouth, ever oblivious...

(Perfect time for some comic relief universe. It's not like we are five minutes away from certain death!)

I kept grumbling in my head until I made it to the store. Looking through the glass wall, the place looked deserted. Getting near the door also caused it to automatically open up.

(Not good, this door will open wide the moment a corpse walks by. Even if it's rather silent, the corpse might hear it and stroll into the store.)

I turn to the group.

"The insides look clear but we can't be sure what lurks in the corners. Stay on guard until we make sure this place is safe." I say while looking at the oncoming sea of corpses.

"The door will attract a lot of the corpses if it keeps opening every time something walks by it." Saeko points at the door that was now wide open.

"Yeah, we will need to find the circuit breaker and shut down the power on the first floor or at least bring down the shutters. Otherwise we'll have to make the door stay open... At least with it stuck open it won't make any noise." I say as I turn my attention back to the store and head into it, with the rest of the group following suit.

We quickly search the first floor for corpses, and find it empty. Saeko, Kohta and I then spread out to search for the circuit board.

Mid search, I went to the glass wall to check how close we were from being ripped apart.

(Shit we're cutting this way to close. No way we can risk closing the shutters now.)

And then, the lights went out, I also think I heard one of the girls yelp?

As the sun was almost out, the first floor turned eerily dark now. Not to mention the moaning from all the corpses outside did not help with the eeriness at all. Not wasting time, I move away from the brittle glass wall and start heading towards the second floor.

The rest of the group did not wait much as well. Either because they did not like the dark floor, or because the corpses were starting to flood the streets in front of the store.

We silently go to the second floor and start checking for any unwelcome guests.

(Finding a corpse now will be really bad. We could end up attracting a whole shitstorm from the outside if we fail to kill it silently.)

Thankfully my fear was unfounded as we found the second floor empty as well.

"Alright... look for stuff you can carry to barricade the stairs. No heavy stuff that needs to be pushed, the screeching would actively kill us." After I finish my sentence the group nods and starts looking around the second floor.

A couple of minutes later. We had erected a pretty lame barrier of chairs, boxes and duct tape.

(Using that duct tape was a nightmare. Pull it too fast and it would make a sound like a goddamn siren... Or I'm just that much on edge.)

Leaving the duct tape on a nearby counter, I look back at the group before we all headed deeper into the store's second floor. Away from that poor excuse of a barrier...

We grabbed some chairs and gathered in the far end of the store, near the glass wall of the second floor, and looked at the sea of corpses below us.

(Ok a thousand might have been an overstatement, but there are still way too many of them.) I think as I looked down at the passing horde.

I then get up from my chair.

"I'm going to take a look around the second floor. It might have some sleeping bags or something. Also... uh, turn down the lights. That glass window will make this room shine like a beacon right now. We can't afford to pick up more survivors, not right now at least." I say as I leave the group behind, giving a last glance at Saeko who simply nodded at me.

I could feel the group staring at me as I walked away.

(I know Saeko agrees with me, she says the exact same thing later. But the rest of them did not seem too keen on trying to avoid helping others. No matter, we still need to keep a low profile. I don't want to risk attracting any crazy chainsaw-wielding clown here.)

Walking around the store's second floor I stop by the ski section.

(Winter sports should have something worth of use.)

I kept looking around until I stopped by something that caught my eye. And just stayed there... Staring.

(I am... In love.)

I move to the hangers and pick up... a black ski mask.

(Carbon fiber frame, polycarbonate visor, it even has its own balaclava.)

I grab the mask and balaclava pair, along with a second balaclava and go to the bathroom.

I always liked masks and helmets. Maybe because of their faceless visage. Or well, maybe they just look cool in my eyes.

Opening the sink, I toss the second balaclava in the running water before using it as a towel to clean my face of whatever crap might have been stuck on it. I then put on the balaclava that came with the mask and then put on the mask itself.

Mask in place, I look at myself in the mirror.

(I feel like the coolest kid in town now. Or the biggest tacticoool tryhard.)

Leaving the bathroom, mask still on, I return to the ski section of the store.

(The visor does not hinder my sight, I can still hear normally. Nice.)

I kept looking around the ski section as the mask gave me another idea.

(Forearm guards, leg guards, knee guards. This place is a frigging treasure trove.)

Grabbing some equipment, I start gearing myself up.

(I would rather wear something completely black. But carbonfiber is tougher and lighter than whatever else is in here. Also, judging from the price tag on these things, I have to guess that it is high-quality carbon fiber too. Whoever owned this place either had cash to bet on products, or just didn't care about profits that much.)

After I geared myself up, I looked at a nearby full body mirror.

(Got to check that these things don't make me sound like a dinner bell before getting hyped... On second thought, risking making any sounds while a sea of corpses is nearby might not be the brightest idea.)

With the usual 'ninja test' not available. I started gyrating in place and did some stretches as silently and slowly as possible to see if any parts would get in the way. This way, any parts that could potentially make any sounds as I move can be ascertained without actually risking everybody's life...

Several minutes later, tests done, I concluded that the knee pads had to go, as they seemed to restrict my movement too much while

also moving the most as I stretched.

After getting rid of the knee pads, I did some stretches again until I finally could say that my range of movements was the same as before and my new gear didn't slide all over the place.

(As silent as I was before getting the new gear. Now, sleeping bags.)

I kept looking around at the ski section until I found a map that displayed the whole second floor floor plan from a top-down view.

(No sleeping bags in the ski section so far... Let's see, the ski section is where I'm at. Hmm, what section would contain what I'm looking for? Could be... hmmm, hiking?)

Before leaving, I grab an extra pair of knee and arm guards.

(For Saeko.)

Nodding to myself, I turn around and start heading to the hiking section. After getting there, it didn't take too long for me to find some sleeping bags.

(Let's see I need five, seven if we count the other two, eight if we add Alice. But good luck explaining that to the group.)

I picked the seven most expensive sleeping bags and tied them together, making a weird-looking caterpillar 'thing' in the process. Then I grab the new 'lifeform' and start moving back towards the group.

Returning to the group I see Kohta looking dejected, Saeko smiling, Saya being beet red and Shizuka being... herself.

(I get the feeling that I just missed something that would make me really REALLY salty.)

Getting near the group caused them to turn their heads, first to the sleeping bags... And then to me.

"Oh... hey Naier, found anyth... ehheh?" Kohta forgot whatever reason made him dejected in the first place and just stared at me, mouth gaping like a fish.

"Sleeping bags... and the thing I'm gonna be buried with." I say giving a few knocks to the mask.

"Ohh?" Saeko turns to me. I could see an ever slight smirk on her face.

(Wait, do I also look like a sadistic psychopath now?)

Saya just stared at me in silence, not speaking at all.

"What... did it leave you speechless?" I say to Saya while tilting my head to the side. I was actually smirking but nobody could see that.

She jerks her head seemingly snapping out of whatever it is she was thinking about.

"Idiot." Is all she said as she turned her face to the window.

I could also hear a subtle, yet constant 'ummmm' coming from Shizuka, so I turned my head to her. She was staring at me... intensely.

(This is not awkward at all.)

"Power ranger." She says, clapping her hands softly together, causing me to facepalm.

I could hear the girls chuckling, even Saya. Kohta for some reason seemed to be stuck in 'fish mouth' mode though.

And then his stomach growled... hard.

"What, so hungry to the point that you're lagging?" I asked as I walked towards my bag.

"Well I haven't eaten all day, I can't help it." Kohta says, looking dejected once more.

Opening my bag, I looked over at the food I packed. A disappointed sigh came out my mouth as I realized that most of it was. Not in that good of a condition anymore, at least they're still edible?

"Pork, cheese curry, pizza, plain cheese, shrimp or cod roe?" I say while rummaging in my bag.

While I was actually asking Kohta, I know that the rest would probably be hungry as well.

And I was right, as they all leaned towards my bag.

"Huh... what?" Kohta asks, still looking like a fish.

"Choose one of them, commando. C'mon chop chop, you're holding the line and I have Post Op packages to deliver.." I say trying to act like an employee in a packed fast food store.

"Uhhh P... pizza." He responds with a slight stutter.

I take the bun that had 'Pizza' written on the label and throw it at him. He awkwardly catches it before realizing what was happening.

"Ohh... ehh, thanks Naier" He says, opening the plastic wrap and taking a bite into the bread, his face turning into one of pure bliss.

"Next." I say.

"Can I have the shrimp one please?" Saeko asks, still leaning slightly towards me.

"Here ya go." I give the shrimp bun to Saeko and she gives me a slight bow before taking the bread.

Then I turn to the two that were left. Shizuka was seemingly in deep thought. And Saya also seemed to be thinking. Not the most similar

of people to be deep in thought.

"UMMMM, Cheese curry." Shizuka finally speaks up and I hand her the one she asked for, she takes it with a giggle.

Saya was the only one left now.

(I guess our princess is also a picky eater?)

"... Cheese..." she says in a low tone of voice.

(Hmm I expected that she would take the more expensive one...)

I take the plain cheese bun and hand it to Saya

"... Thanks" she then turns her attention back towards the window.

I shrug and grab one of the two buns that remained without looking. I lifted my mask and pulled my balaclava down until it was under my chin, opened the packaging and took a bite.

(Hmmm, pork.)

As I kept eating though I noticed something strange.

Saeko was staring at me, and so was Saya, and Kohta... and even Shizuka,

This went on for a couple of minutes until.

"The Ninja Penguin."

I didn't even realize who said that before the whole group was trying their best not to spit their food out of their noses.

(Oh come on! I don't even have anything remotely white on me!)

I slowly lower my mask while still chewing

"You're all just jealous of my cool new mask." I say to the group while they were trying to regain their bearings.

I think I saw some tears running down Saeko's cheek during all this, which honestly is a first. Even if I were to add the whole anime in there.

After we're finished 'eating' we start preparing the sleeping bags so we can spend the night.

We decided that we will go with three shifts of single person guard duty while the others slept. Just in case something happens. I was to be the first one on guard so I grabbed a chair and took a seat.

As everybody started getting ready for bed, I saw the extra equipment I picked up for Saeko, tossed to the side.

(Must have fallen there when I dropped the 'sleeping bag entity'.)

I get up and grab the equipment, then head to Saeko, who was sitting alone by the window.

"Hey, Busujima." Reacting to my voice, Saeko turns towards me.

"Since you are gonna be close and personal out there I think you could put these to good use."

I say as I hand her the stuff I picked for her.

"Hope you don't mind the color though. I don't rank very high in fashion sense."

"Ohh, thank you Sepfier." Saeko bows after putting the equipment on her lap and smiles at me.

"And now I'm not going to be the only power ranger here. Goodnight Busujima."" I say as I let out a small chuckle and turn around.

"Goodnight... ninja-pe."

"Naier... just... Naier." I turned around and cut Saeko off before she could throw me that last side jab, then turned back to walk towards my chair... I could hear muffled giggling behind me now.

"All of you are just jelly of my cool mask."

Hope you don't mind walking

"YOU GIVE THAT BACK GODDAMNIT!" I shout, chasing after Saya.

"YOU WILL NEVER CATCH ME ALIVE!" Saya screams, throwing a glance back at me.

She was running like a rugby player, with a rather giant sweetroll under her arm.

"GIVE ME BACK MY SWEETROLL!" I screamed as I kept sprinting towards her.

"KOHTA, CLOSE HER OFF!" I then shouted at Kohta who was running besides me with a plastic bow in his hands.

"YEEESSSSS... ARROW TO THE KNEEE!" He responds, using his plastic bow to fire an arrow aimed towards... me?

"TRAITOOOOOOR!" I shout as I fall face flat to the floor, the world around me going black. Turning myself around, I see Saeko looking over me.

"Let me guess, somebody stole your sweet roll" She asks with a deadpan voice as she keeps looking down at me.

"YES!" I shout back.

And just then, Saya walks up to me, the sweetroll... gone.

"Sepfier." She says while staring at me.

"Where is ma sweetroll woman!?" I respond, glaring at her.

"Sepfier" She says once more, seemingly ignoring what I just asked her.

"Yes that's my name, now where is..."

"SEPFIER!" She cuts me off before I could finish.

"WHAT!?" I shout back at her.

"... Goddamn it you masked idiot." Upon finishing her sentence, my vision starts shaking violently.

Closing my eyes, I felt like I was once again falling down...

After a few seconds of gliding through the darkness, I open my eyes. Only to myself staring at the ceiling of the sports store. With Saya leaning over me as she kept shaking me.

With... quite the shakingly tantalizing view if I might add.

"He even went to sleep while wearing that mask... idiot." She groans as she keeps shaking me.

(She probably doesn't realize I'm already awake, as the mask's shaded visor hides my eyes.)

After some seconds, she stops shaking me and just sits there, staring...

(Ok... it's getting way too awkward with the way she's staring at me now.)

"If you keep staring at me like that, things will start getting weird." I speak up without moving.

Saya remained rooted on the spot for a couple of seconds, probably processing the situation. Before turning beet red.

"Idiot, get up." She responds with a frown as she quickly stands up and starts walking away.

"Wait." I call out to her as I get myself to a sitting position.

She turns around and folds her arms.

"You... you don't happen to have a sweetroll on you... do you?" In response to my question, Saya just blinks at me and rolls her eyes.

"... Is that mask blocking the oxygen flow to your brain?" She turns around and starts walking away again.

"Idiot" She adds in a lower tone.

(That's four idiots in... five minutes or so? I think she's starting to like me.)

Chuckling to myself I shimmied out of my sleeping bag and rolled it up. Only to realize that it's filled with wet spots. And no, not 'that' type of wet spots.

(Hmm, maybe I should get a new sleeping bag. My clothes were drenched in corpse blood and I didn't take them off before sleeping yesterday. Well, no need to spend too much time thinking about it, it's not like these things cost me anything.)

Looking around, I could see the rest of the group scattered around the second floor. Nodding to myself I toss the ruined sleeping bag aside before picking up my bag and start walking towards the hiking department.

Getting there, I pick another expensive sleeping bag and roll it up as tight as I can. I then open my bag, and take out the remaining buns that I didn't try to offer last night, as they were in a less, pristine condition. Aka squashed.

(I don't know about the rest of the group, but I'm still eating these. Definitely not the time to be picky.)

With that thought in mind, I finally place the rolled-up sleeping bag snugly inside my bag.

(With the extra clothes being the only thing that takes up any real space now, I could stuff at least four to five sleeping bags in here if I roll them up tightly. As long as they aren't too large to begin with at least.)

Plan in mind, I start looking around the hiking section for the extra sleeping bags, trying to find a good balance between the size and the probable quality by its price tag.

I was mid search when I heard footsteps behind me. Turning around, I saw Saeko.

"Good morning." As Saeko spoke I noticed that she was wearing the stuff I gave her yesterday.

"Morning." I answer before turning my head back to the sleeping bags of decent quality that I found.

"Getting a new sleeping bag?" She asks as she walks up next to me.

"Yeah, I don't know about you. But I didn't exactly sleep in clean clothes, and my sleeping is in an atrocious state. So, I was thinking of getting a new one along with some spares, now that I still got the chance."

Saeko stays silent, seemingly in thought.

"I will pack five of them in my bag, so if you have any preference better tell me now." I add up as I point to my bag.

"I see, thank you. Any sleeping bag will do for me." She nods with a slight smile.

"Also, the only breakfast we have right now is mashed buns." I then point next to my bag at the packaged, squished food.

Saeko nods, walks up to the buns and picks them up. Leaving one behind.

"I will go ask if anybody else wants one, is that alright?" She asks, holding the buns in her hands.

"Just tell the rest of the group that they will be getting new bags as well. This sports store has some very good backpacks we could use."
"I nod to Saeko as I speak.

"Alright, I'll call everybody here after they have eaten." she turns around and leaves after nodding.

A couple of minutes later, packing finished, I had taken my mask and balaclava off and was with a wannabe bun in my mouth.

(Ok... let's see. Right now I have five sleeping bags, a swiss-knife, a compass, a map, a flashlight, a spare change of clothes and a screwdriver in my bag. My bag is packed full with the only place left to add stuff being the outside pockets for small stuff like a gun magazine, and the side straps, probably for weapons of some kind. At least now that the rest of the group will have bags, we can get all the sleeping bags we need, along with space for anything we might need later. Ammo does take up space after all... Huh, I need to find the lone survivor and ask him how he can carry two hundred rockets when the only thing he's wearing is a blue tight suit.)

After I was done eating, I covered my face once more and then spent the next half hour picking bags that the rest of the group could use...

I must have lost track of time looking at bags, as I didn't realise when the whole group had gathered to my location. Until I turned around to find them all looking at me.

"Good morning, Saeko informed you of why I needed you all here?"

The group nods at me.

"Alright. Well, pick a bag that you like."

The group nods once more before spreading out, browsing the bags that were around.

(I admit, I sorta expected Saya to be all bitchy about it. But it's good to see that she's willing to at least take a bag... Even if it's a small one from what I can see.)

A couple of minutes later, the group seemed to have decided on their picks. With everybody except Kohta picking a medium-sized bag. Kohta, on the other hand, had picked a giant hiking bag, the thing being about half as tall as him.

"Uhhh... Kohta. Will you be able to run if that bag is full?" I ask as I scratch my mask with a raised eyebrow.

Kohta thinks for a bit before going back and taking a medium-sized hiking bag. It was still quite bigger than what the rest picked though.

(Well he is the go-to guy in regards to guns so it should be fine. Worst case scenario we just ditch the bag... He's probably thinking about ammo space over mobility or something.)

I nod to myself before speaking.

"Alright. I myself have five sleeping bags in my bag. See if you can toss the ones you used and get new, clean ones when you have the chance. You should also pack some spares just in case" I say as I point to the sleeping bags I had gathered on the floor.

The group looks at the sleeping bags and then back to me, silent.

"Should we really use so much space just for sleeping bags Naier?" Kohta was the first one to ask.

(Judging from the look on their faces, they either all think the same thing or they're still not used to the mask. If it's the latter though, then tough luck. The mask stays.)

"Ask me that again when you'll have to sleep on a dirty, rough, cold floor because your sleeping bag is in worse condition than the floor. Being able to have a good night rest is as important as being fed or hydrated. Otherwise, sooner or later, you'll start making mistakes that you would otherwise not make, mistakes that could be fatal... Or would you rather carry sheets with you? Because, end of the world or not, I am not going to sleep on a blood soaked bed if I can avoid it. Thank you very much."

Thankfully the group, especially Shizuka and Saya, find my arguments to be rock solid as they started picking some sleeping bags of their liking.

And in total, we now had nine sleeping bags.

(Well, if they were not sold on the importance of spares, it's their loss. But at least now we got enough for little Alice as well.)

With the packing done, we moved to the glass wall so we could assess the situation on the street.

"The big mass of corpses seems to have moved away from the front of the store hours ago and the number of corpses that are moving towards the west have decreased drastically... Either because the civilians there have moved past the bridge or because..." Saya pushed her glasses with her finger while she spoke, her eyes focused on the street.

"Our rendezvous with Komuro was planned at seven, so we got some time until then." Saeko spoke up.

"It's still nine am. So yes, we still got time on our hands. We can either go now and hunker down in the park, or wait and see if the corpses will decrease in number even more." After saying my opinion, I turn my head to the group.

"It should be fine if we leave now too. From the looks for it, most of the corpses that were nearby had already moved away. I just hope

we won't find another hoard approaching if we start moving." Saya speaks up after me.

"So we leave now?" Kohta asks.

"I don't see a problem with it. The sooner we get to the park the more time we'll have to scout the area." Saeko starts moving towards the barricade after she finishes talking. Seeing that we're moving out soon, I take the swiss knife and map out of my bag and put them in my pockets before strapping the bag back on my back.

"Alright, we are leaving now then." I say as I start following behind Saeko.

Getting to the barricade, I cut the duct tape with my swiss knife before sliding it back in my back pocket.

(Hmm, I'm glad I bought this swiss army knife, quite useful. And in a pinch, I can use it to stab a corpse in their pterion. While the screwdriver is safer in terms of reach, the swiss knife is better than trying to poke them with my finger. Furthermore, I can keep the swiss knife close in hand. I can just pocket it without it becoming a nuisance, unlike the screwdriver. Which I constantly have to worry about stabbing myself in the kidneys when it's not in the bag.)

Going down to the first floor we find the glass wall intact and the insides clear of corpses, thank god for small miracles.

"Let's check if we can force the door open. Turning the power back up might cause too much noise with all the electronics on the floor starting up all at once." Saya keeps moving after speaking, heading towards the glass door.

"There should be a back exit too, or maybe a fire escape." Saeko adds up, following behind Saya.

Getting to the door we check if we can open it manually. But as none of us knew how the door even functioned in the first place, we came

back with only negative results.

I then take a quick look around the first floor, my eyes stopping at the counter, or more correctly, the door behind it.

"There's an employee only door behind the counter, might have an extra exit there. As the panic probably started mid-working hours the emergency exits should be unlocked." I say as I start walking towards the counter...

Reaching the door behind the counter I grab the knob and turn it.

(Good, it's unlocked.)

I open the door to find a medium-sized room inside. Two sofas side by side with a medium-sized table in front of them. On the far right side, I could see a small fridge. And in the opposite direction of the fridge, a door with the fire exit sign on it.

(I just remembered... I am thirsty and I packed only one bottle of water. Definitely not going to last.)

I take a quick look around the room before going in, then head straight to the fridge.

Opening it, I see some ice-cold goodness. Actually, it was just water and some soda, but hey... I'm thirsty and we are in the middle of a zombie outbreak.

"We got some cold water here." I say as I pick a bottle, and the rest of the group instantly flocks to the fridge.

(In retrospect, it was pretty stupid of me to forget to pack more water. Well hindsight and all that.)

After the group emptied the fridge of any form of liquid, packing everything in their bags, they then started looking around the room for any other things we could use. While the rest of the group was

rummaging around the room, I walked to the emergency exit and tried to open the door.

(Unlocked as well, we're in luck.)

Peeking my head out, I saw that the back alley was clear of corpses. It seems we could safely leave from here. I close the door and turn around towards the group.

"The door is unlocked, we can leave from here, no corpses that I could see. " I say pointing to the door behind me with my thumb.

"There is nothing else here we can use, we should go." Saeko speaks up right after me. We all nod and get ready to leave.

"Same formation as before?" I ask.

"Yes, I think that would be best," Saeko answers.

We then leave through the emergency exit with Saeko leading the way. We first walk through the alleyway and then back into the main road.

(The place is really empty compared to yesterday. Not that I'm complaining.)

"Alright. From here we need to go twelve blocks straight east and then two blocks north. The park then should be to our right side. The bridge is one-block away from there." I was looking at the map as I informed the group of the ground we need to cover.

The group nods, and we start our little 'trip' to the park.

(Wonder if Takashi and Rei spent all night driving. In the anime they didn't stop anywhere for the night when they met up with the group on the bridge... Makes me wonder if they will just pop out a corner while we're walking towards the park or something. Or if they decided to be all kinky about it and went to a hotel for the night.)

Yet as we kept going, no 'Wild Takashi' appeared.

(Huh, I vote kinky hotel. At least the streets ahead look almost empty of corpses. Let's hope it stays that way.)

With that, I turn my attention back to the map, walking behind Saeko and not really thinking of anything.

Three blocks later, the corpses were even smaller in numbers. I also started seeing a couple of them that were not moving west and were just shuffling about aimlessly.

We could also pretty much walk in a straight line now, without having a corpse blocking our way.

"So after we meet up with Takashi we go with his plan of meeting with our families?" Kohta, probably feeling less tense from the decreasing amount of corpses around speaks up.

"Yes." Saya answers bluntly.

"Speaking of which, where are your families located, everybody?" Shizuka asks.

(I'm not liking where this is going.)

"Mine have already passed away," Shizuka starts.

"The only kin I have left is my father and he is overseas overseeing a new dojo." Saeko speaks next.

"My parents are probably both at home on the other side of the Onbetsu bridge." Saya continues after Saeko.

"My parents are not in Japan. My father is a jewel merchant in Amsterdam buying supplies, my mother is a fashion designer in Paris."

(Ohh I remember this part with Kohta's crazy rich parents. I wonder why in the anime it is never shown that he is, well, very wealthy. Or it's shown and I don't remember it. Hmmm, as for the others. Other than Saya's parents and Rei's mother, we don't ever get a chance to see the rest. Although I'm pretty sure that the cop with the sniper in the last chapter of the manga is Rei's dad. That leaves... Takashi's mother.)

Finishing my thoughts I lift my head from the map and realize that the group is now staring at me.

(Great... Now they want to know about my family... they're all dead, the end...)

"Whatever family I have is in Europe and they tend to travel a lot, so I have no idea where they might be right now." I answer bluntly.

"You did not manage to contact them?" Shizuka asks.

"No, my phone could not reach them..." I answer once more.

(Actually, that was a lie, I never tried to contact them in the first place. I took the sim card out of my phone before the outbreak even started.)

The group fell silent, and before anybody else could speak I continued.

"There is no point thinking about it right now. What we should focus on right now is making sure that we don't end up dead before a chance to do something about it appears."

The group remained silent.

(Oh come on, they didn't seem to have a problem that Kohta and Saeko's parents were abroad, why are they so bothered about mine? Do they think that I might be feeling trapped here because I am a transfer student or something?)

After thinking for a bit I speak up.

"But what I do know at least. Is that my family would never wish on being the 'thing' that caused me to be depressed... or the ones around me. I intend to honor that wish."

(A family with good relations would never want to see other parts of it suffering, no matter the reason. And I know that my real family would think that, so it's not like I am lying to them right now... Right?)

"We should worry about arriving at the park on time, rather than worry about the people that are on the other side of the globe right now." I add up.

"Y... yes we need to make sure Komuro is fine." Saya finally breaks the 'mood' the group was in.

"I am sure Komuro and Miyamoto are fine, they are both more than capable." Saeko adds after Saya without turning to look at us. Kohta and Shizuka nod at Saeko's statement seemingly snapping out of whatever caused them to fall silent in the first place.

After that, nothing really changed until we got near the sixth east block.

"Looks like none of them are going west any more." Saeko speaks up.

"Yes I can see that. We are pretty far away from the evacuation route after all." Saya speaks next.

"Should not change much for us. They don't seem to increase in number, so we can still walk past them easily." I say as I look ahead.

With that observation, we kept moving forward.

"You think the horde from yesterday might have overrun the evacuation route?" Kohta asks.

"Doubt it. Probably ended up stuck on a barricade, or met a hail of bullets." I respond, still looking at the map.

(After all, the bridge falls to the horde while the group is in Rika's house, if that was the same bridge that is... highly probable though. No way the police is going to risk it and split their forces by having two evacuation routes.)

"The ones near the store were still going west. Meaning that there was still noise to attract them... So it seems very likely that the evacuation is still progressing normally." Saya answers after me.

"Still, it's amazing how so many of them can gather together." Shizuka speaks up after Saya.

"No, not really. They are attracted to sound, so if a small horde manages to form, then they would make enough noise to attract more of them. Which would make the horde bigger and that would, in turn make the horde louder, causing even more of them to follow the horde. Rinse and repeat until you get a large horde stumbling around gathering more corpses as they move." Saya looks at Shizuka as she speaks.

"Woow, you're really smart Takagi!" I hear Shizuka say in amazement.

"HUMPH, of course. I AM a genius after all!" Saya responds with a huff.

I tried really hard not to chuckle at Saya's last statement as it would probably make her furious. But, for some reason, I found it... really funny.

About fifteen minutes later we reached the eighth block.

Looking at the map I checked the remaining six blocks we had to walk through.

(I have not seen any type of blockade so far. So the bridge near the park wasn't used as an evacuation route? Also the corpses are starting to increase in number again, I guess we have reached the edge of where the corpses were attracted by the horde. Nothing too dangerous though.)

As we kept moving down the street I heard Saeko speak from the front.

"Sepfier, how far till the park?"

"4 blocks straight, two blocks after we turn left and we're there," I say in a low tone lifting my head from the map.

Saeko just nods without looking back.

(Because I don't know if we will be near Shizuka's house like in the anime, I wonder if we can find a car to get to Shizuka's house. If Takashi arrives with that orange bike, we'll have to do three trips in total, one to 'check' the place, two to move the group there. Too bad so far all the cars I saw were in a 'toss me to the scrapyard' condition.

Also, while I don't know where we are right now compared to the anime, I don't think going anywhere else other than Shizuka's house is a good idea. For... multiple reasons. More importantly, if we don't go there, we lose the guns and Alice dies. While I do think that we should not be taking in random survivors, knowingly leaving the kid to die after she just saw her dad getting killed is just. Yeah, no. I'm not that coldhearted... not yet at least.

There is a fine line between self-preservation and cold-hearted ruthlessness. And, at best, decisions like these are impossible to just paint in black and white. But leaving Alice to die when I can do otherwise is just...)

Upon reaching the twelfth block, finishing our journey to the east, I raise my head, look back at the group and speak up in a low tone

once more.

"Next intersection we go left. Then after two blocks straight and we will see a park that takes up a whole block on our right, that's our destination."

I see the group nod before I turn my attention back to the map. Once we reached the intersection we moved to the center and stopped. Looking to my left I could see the street we needed to take.

(That road looks... more corpse ridden than the one we are on, but it should be traversable.)

I motion with my hand for the group to move and we start going down the left.

As we kept moving forward I could see an increase in crashed cars ahead of us. While they did not really block our way, it was kind of unnerving.

(I hope the bridge is not blocked by cars.)

As we kept moving forward... I came to a realization.

(Wait, the group never actually 'crossed' a bridge. They just used the humvee's ability to traverse through water and just drove through the river. I guess when the water level was not too high? I do remember reading that a humvee, if equipped for it, can go through one and a half meter deep water. Hm, At least that means I can stop worrying about whether the bridge will be blocked or not.)

With that off my mind, I continue walking behind Saeko. It did not take too long after we walked north until I heard Shizuka speak.

"We made it."

As the park slowly came into view, I started scanning the surrounding area for Takashi.

(I don't see any orange bikes around.)

The park was rather flat, and while it did have some patches of trees around there was no place in it to hide effectively. In other words, Takashi was not here yet.

"Alright we are here. I don't see Komuro anywhere, so now what?" Saya asks.

"The park looks relatively clear, so I don't see a reason to head towards the bridge. We could find a vantage point and just wait." I say, turning around as I took off my bag, opening it and putting my map back in, then taking my bat out of the side straps before wearing my bag again.

"And what can we use as a vantage point?" Kohta asks.

(Hmmm... good question. There isn't any elevated ground around here that could help block any corpses that wander too close while also letting us easily see Takashi.)

Looking around the area my eyes fell on a box truck, with the cab facing us, that was abandoned in the middle of the street a little further away from us.

(That could work, the cargo box is too high for the corpses to reach. I am sure I never saw the corpses actually climb anything. The truck itself seems to be abandoned and not crashed. So, maybe, we could also use it to get to Shizuka's house.)

I point at the truck to the group.

"We can use the cargo container of that truck and just wait inside. With the lifted entry and the fact that corpses, from what I have seen, can't climb we should be safe ins..." Before I can finish Saya speaks up.

"Komuro won't be able to see us if we hide in there idiot."

"... I got that part covered." I answer Saya.

(I really want to answer with 'don't worry I'll make sure your boyfriend sees us' but she will probably start shouting. And I don't need corpses on our asses while we are stuck waiting.)

"Soooo... box truck?" I ask the group.

The rest of the group looks around, seeing nothing else that can be used, they nod.

Making our way to the truck, with me in the lead, I realize why it was abandoned in the first place.

(The wheels on the truck are looking in different directions. I might not be a car expert... but i don't think it is supposed to do that. I guess driving it to Shizuka's house is a bust.)

I crouch down and check under the truck before getting too near.

(Nothing under the truck,but...)

I could see somebody standing near the back, where the cargo doors are.

I get back up and make a silence motion, putting my finger on my mask in where my mouth should be at. I then point at the truck and make a slit throat motion and start walking towards the back of the truck, keeping some distance from it. Saeko followed behind me while Kohta stayed behind with Saya and Shizuka.

After the back of the truck came into view, I could see a corpse leaning onto the right cargo door.

(A corpse is kissing the backside of the truck. Wait... that sounded wrong.)

I look at Saeko and nod at her.

She casually walks behind the corpse and takes a swing to the back of its head with her bokken, crushing its skull against the container.

While I was walking up to her she took hold of the handle that was on the container door. Before she could open the door, I grabbed the handle along with her hand, stopping her from opening the door.

"Wait... Not like this." I whisper pulling my hand back. She turns to me, raising an eyebrow.

"That corpse was trying to enter into the truck, meaning something had attracted its attention to get into that position we found it in the first place. Open the right door with your right arm and move away to the side while opening the door. If something pops out... it won't fall on you like that."

She keeps looking at me for a few seconds before speaking up.

"I see, thank you." She says, finishing her sentence with a slight smile and a nod before she moved to open the door with her other hand.

As she opened the door I took a step back.

While nothing instantly jumped out, I was not wrong. I could see a corpse slowly walking towards the opened door. I look at Saeko and motion her to wait and make a 'one' sign with my hand.

She nods and stands still behind the door.

The corpse just walks through the open door and falls out of the container, falling flat on the floor.

I walked up to it while looking inside of the container before putting my leg on its back and took a golf-like swing on the corpse's head, causing blood to splatter on the asphalt while the corpse stopped moving for good.

I then open the second door of the container.

"Clear." I say as Saeko walks up to me.

"Good news is, I'm pretty sure that corpses can't climb up here. The bad news is... that corpse that was in here makes the whole thing smell like, ughhh." I say as I look away.

"So, do we look for something else?" Saeko had her hand on her nose as she spoke to me.

Looking inside the container once more I saw an extra door on the right side of the truck's cargo box.

"No, wait." I say as I take a deep breath of fresh air and climb inside while holding my breath.

I walk up to the door and open it.

"This should let the air flow through, taking that stench with it... hopefully." I say as I turn back and hurried out of the container.

(There was not a lot of blood on the floor of the container so it should be easy to wipe it off as the container is made of, probably aluminum?)

I then move to the side of the truck and motion for the rest of the group to come.

After they got close I gave them a rundown of the situation.

"So, we'll wait a bit here before going inside. By the way, I know I've asked before, but, anybody got a handkerchief or a towel? There is some blood left in there from the last... occupant." I point at the truck behind me after I finished talking.

Also, take a guess on who was not pleased.

"Couldn't you find a place that was not. This?" Saya speaks up with a scowl on her face.

Shizuka, the angel that she is, takes off her bag and hands me a towel. Ignoring the little princess, I take the towel and climb inside the container, wiping whatever blood was on the floor.

"Got a plastic bag to put this in or do I toss it?" I turn to Shizuka.

"Toss it, I have more of them packed." She says as she puts the bag back on her back.

"Well the place already smells a lot better and it has not even been even two minutes yet." I say as I walk to the edge of the container.

I then turn around and put my foot on the bolts of the container's door, using them as a foothold, I then grab the roof of the container and pull myself up. With the roof over my hips, I raise one of my legs putting it on the roof before rolling sideways.

Still laying flat on the roof, I turn, belly down and slide myself until I can see the rest of the group under me.

"You are free to come up here if you don't want to be down there Takagi. Though you'll be stuck up here with me then." I say with a chuckle. Saya just huffs in response.

A couple of minutes later and some re-dead corpses, courtesy of Saeko, the rest of the group climbed in the back of the truck. I was just laying there, flat on the truck's roof using my bag as a pillow with my bat next to me.

(I don't wanna get up... this roof is weirdly comfortable.)

I could hear the group chatting silently under me, but I couldn't really understand what they were saying.

(I am really going to fall asleep like this. Well, Takashi should be on a bike, so I should be able to hear it. Yeah... No, I should really get up and keep a lookout.)

Groaning, I get to a sitting position and lazily look around me.

Whatever poor corpse had gotten near was long gone so the coast was mostly clear. As for Takashi, I could not see or hear anything.

(I wonder when they will arrive...)

I sort of lost track of time staring at the same scenery afterward. I was starting to nod off when I heard a small thud behind me. Turning around I see Saeko climbing the container.

"Need any he... never mind." Before I could finish my sentence she was already up.

"It's alright, but thanks for asking." She smiles before looking around.

"Anything worth mentioning?" She turns her attention to me.

"No movement. Not from anything alive at least. But it is still too early to get worried, we're supposed to meet at seven. We still got hours before that." I answer without taking my eyes off the streets.

"Hmm..." She keeps looking around. A couple minutes of silence passed.

(Psst. Hey brain, think of a subject... help a bro out. It is getting very awkward up here.)

And then... an idea pops in my head.

(Thanks brain, hope I am not going to regret this later.)

"Hey, Busujima." I speak up.

"Hmm?" She turns to me.

"I was wondering. Would you be willing to help me train?" I ask without turning my head to Saeko.

"Help you train?" She asks, staring at me and tilting her head.

At that, I turn my head to her.

"You're the president of the kendo club and from what I have seen in the school posters, you also won the national championship. But honestly, just seeing you fight was reason enough for me. Right now I am probably not much of a challenge to you. Hell, I don't think I'll ever be a challenge to you, but that isn't the point. The point is that you're able to protect the ones you care for when the need arises. I can't" I say as I fold my arms.

(God, that was cringy. Felt like I was reading a line from a B rated superhero comic. But I could not think of anything else to say that wouldn't make this whole situation weird. It's not like I am lying though. I do want to make sure the group survives.)

Saeko just smiles in response.

"If you don't mind me asking. Who are the ones 'you' want to protect?"

(Is she doing this on purpose?)

I stay quiet and look away, thinking of what to say.

"The 'ones' who would also protect me if need be." I say, turning my head back to her.

She stays silent for a while staring at my... mask? Before she smiles once again.

"Don't expect that I will go easy on you then, Sepfier." She says, still smiling at me.

(And I do believe I just dug my own grave.)

"Ok, so... do I call you teacher, master or something?" I say shrugging in the process.

Saeko just chuckles.

"I would prefer if you just called me Saeko, if you don't mind of course."

(She is definitely doing this on purpose now...)

I nod.

"Call me Naier instead of Sepfier, and you got yourself a deal." I answer to my future torturer.

Saeko nods at me before going back down to the rest of the group.

(Oook. Sooo, this just happened. It... it did just happen right? I did not actually fall asleep and dreamt it?)

After making sure Saeko had gone down I pinch myself.

(Yep, as real as it gets... Though now I don't know if I should be happy, or scared that Saeko might get a bit 'too' excited during our training and send me to a coma)

And then, the next couple of hours passed uneventfully, especially compared to that...

I was once again starting to nod off, sitting comfortably on the roof of the truck.

(Why am I so goddamn sleepy after getting on this stupid roof?)

At least I was sleepy, until the silence was broken by the sound of a rumbling engine. Whatever drowsiness I had disappeared as my head turned to the direction of the sound.

(Either Takashi is here, or I am about to get shot.)

I hurriedly went prone as I kept staring towards the sound that was progressively getting louder. The rest of the group, foolishly ran out of the truck after hearing the sound of an engine.

(If this isn't Takashi, they are really letting themselves become easy targets.)

With that in mind, I speak up.

"Don't break cover yet, we do not know who is coming. Stay focused until the last second"

The group looked at me as I laid flat on the truck's roof. Shizuka and Saya got back inside the truck while Kohta hid beside it, aiming down his nail gun at the upcoming source of noise with Saeko waiting next to Kohta.

The next couple of seconds felt like an eternity... until. I saw an orange bike with two people on it.

(And the hero arrives ladies and gentleman.)

I slam the roof with my hand to signal that it's safe and then jump down.

"Takashi is here." I say, to Kohta and Saeko.

The rest of the group quickly gets out of the truck and runs past me. Once the bike gets near, Takashi stops it and gets off. I didn't really feel like joining the whole thing, so I just stayed back keeping overwatch for any corpses that might have been lured by the bike.

And the corpses 'did' hear the bike. The ones that were scattered around the park were now walking towards us.

(We will have a lot of unwelcome company if we don't move out soon.)

"Uhhhh... and who is that?" I hear Takashi ask.

Turning my head I see him looking straight at me.

And before anybody could speak.

"Apparently I'm a penguin." I say to Takashi trying to sound as serious as I can.

Takashi and Rei just stared at me in confusion.

"Or you know, Naier Sepfier, take your pick." I speak up again.

"Oh... ohhh. Didn't realise it was you with the mask on." He says before turning to the rest of the group.

(It's not like I was the last person in the group you didn't see, way to show that you don't even remember I exist dude.)

"So uhh, what's with the bags? And where's the bus?" He asks.

"We picked 'em up on our way here. We'll explain what happened after we get away from here though. The sound of the bike is causing the corpses from the park and all around us to walk towards us. Let's just go to the bridge for now?" I say, to Takashi.

Without much of a choice the group agrees and we head to the bridge, pushing the bike with us.

Upon reaching the bridge. We see that it was piled up with crashed cars from end to end.

"Blocked off." I hear Kohta say with a dejected tone.

"We passed some other bridges on our way here. All of them were just like this one." Takashi speaks up.

(No surprise there, without the police maintaining order and safety, most people must have switched to an 'every man for himself' mentality the moment the panic started.)

We decided to head under the bridge before making a decision on what to do next.

On the way there the group explained how we bailed on Shido, how we stayed in the sports store, and how we got here.

"You... stole the bus keys, and then you tossed them away?" Takashi asks with a baffled look on his face.

(Of course he would ask that.)

"I prefer the term. Borrowed, permanently." I say with a shrug.

"Heh... bastard deserves it." I hear Rei speak up with a slight grin.

After some minutes of silence, we arrived under the bridge.

"So what do we do now?" Kohta asks.

And the group starts thinking of our next plan of action.

(Shizuka should think of her house... right?)

A couple of minutes pass. And the group was not making any progress, or more exactly. Shizuka was not making any progress.

(Seems I have to push this train along.)

"Wish I had a tank right now." I say folding my arms looking away from the group.

While the rest of the group just stared at me. Shizuka's brain gears finally started to spin.

Finally, she claps her hands together and smiles.

"Ohhhh! My friend's house has a car that looks like a tank" She says with a beaming face.

(Thank you, thank you, hold your applause.)

"I didn't think of it as it's a bit far from here..." She continues.

"Tank car? I vote yes." I say raising my hand.

"Is it an apartment? How is the view?" Kohta asks.

"Ohh it is a maisonette near the river, it has a great view and a convenience store nearby." She says.

(I don't think that's what he meant by the 'view' Shizuka. Then again, you are you.)

"Is it your boyfriend's place?" Saya asks with a sly face.

Shizuka then gets flustered as she starts hurriedly explaining how it's a female friend, aka Rika, that owns the house.

I turn around ignoring the group's idle chatter and look at the crashed cars at the bridge.

(Contrary to the anime. She now says that the place is not near. So walking is definitely not a good idea. We either need a second bike or preferably a car, or be forced to make three trips with the bike there.)

I start moving away from the group, looking around for any vehicle that might be in working condition. A couple of seconds later, I hear Kohta going on an excited ramble.

(We just got to part with the guns huh?)

"Naier, is something wrong?" I hear a female voice from behind me.

Turning around, I see Saeko looking at me.

"We will need more than just a bike if the place is far, or we'll have to make multiple trips with the bike. Not something I want to do if we can avoid it to be honest. If we could just find a second bike or a car." I say as I turn my head back to the street that was filled with wrecks.

A couple of seconds pass.

"Wait, Naier? When did you two..."

"He would not agree with Ninja penguin." Saeko cuts off Saya as she glances at me.

I then turn around and stare at Saeko.

(I am starting to think that she was the one who started this whole damn penguin thing.)

I raise my hand and take a deep breath. Only to just drop my hand with a sigh before turning around again.

A couple of minutes later Takashi spoke up.

"We need to check out the house first. Miss Marikawa and I will go check the place out."

"We could also just use the car that is parked there to get everybody all at once." Shizuka speaks up.

(True... but if any survivors spot the Humvee, I am pretty sure that they will try to tail it. That... could get us some unwanted visitors.)

Before the rest of the group could speak up I started talking.

"I don't think that it is a good idea. If that tank car is really as attention-grabbing as it sounds, we would get unwanted attention on us. Desperate survivors would use desperate measures, better to use it only when it is really necessary." I say to the group.

After some minutes of silence a decision was reached.

"Alright... we will return with the bike and see what we can do from there." Takashi drives off with Shizuka right after saying that.

The rest of the group spent the next ten minutes looking for any extra vehicle we could use and clubbing any corpse that got too near after hearing the bike. Sadly, we found nothing so we just decided to wait under the bridge for Takashi to return.

I had moved away from the group, leaning against a pillar.

(Let's see... the bike could probably take... four people if we really push it. Right now there is Me, Kohta, Takashi, Rei, Saeko, Saya and Shizuka. While there are only seven of us we will need somebody to drive the bike back. So it still balances out to at least needing two trips. What is left to decide is. How we'll divide the groups.)

"Thinking of something?" I turn my head to the voice to see Saeko next to me.

"How can we split the group without risking it too much, as we are stuck with one bike." I say looking at Saeko.

"And? What do you have in mind?" She asks.

"Well other than the obvious that we will need to make two trips of four people as the driver needs to bring the bike back. Marikawa needs to be in the first group as she has the keys and well, it's her friend's house. That leaves two other people and three that will have to wait." I say as I'm still looking at Saeko.

"Well this does seem to be the only problem, so it just leaves us to figure out who goes when." She says as she tilts her head.

"Not really... I also think the ones that stay behind need to be able to fight as they will be left exposed compared to being in the house. So that leaves Kohta, me, you and Miyamoto. Meaning one of us will go with the first group while the others wait." I fold my arms as I finish speaking.

"Hmmm, any idea who will go first?" Saeko asks again.

"I got... nothing." I respond, shrugging in the process.

"Well, we can figure this out after Komuro returns. After all, we don't even know if the house will be in a good enough condition to stay in." Saeko then looked at the street that the bike took off from before she walked back towards the rest of the group.

(I know the house will be fine though...)

A couple of minutes later Takashi and Shizuka return with the bike. After the bike comes to a stop and the group gathers around, Takashi says that the house is in perfect condition. And explains that the tank car is an armored jeep, aka the Humvee.

Saeko then pretty much says to the group what I just told her.

"So, who from the four of us goes with the first group?" Saeko asks.

The group stays silent for a minute.

"I'll go," Rei speaks up.

And with that, the group is split up again. Now it was me, Saeko and Kohta left behind. There was not much to do now other than waiting.

At least. For the other two... Me?

(Zombie outbreaks and rainbow puking unicorns... What I really need to do is prepare myself for what will happen in that house... I already feel my 'I am being salty' meter rising.)

Break? what's a break?

(That's... one big ass house.)

I was standing in the driveway, next to Rika's home. The place was surrounded by a tall concrete wall, along with some fences that blocked any opening that was left open by said wall. In other words, we were safe. For now anyway.

(Still, this place is nothing compared to Saya's castle sized house. Even if I have never seen it before, the Anime made it obvious how big that place was...)

By the time I finally arrived here, it was already dark. Dark and rather silent, if you don't count the distant sounds of horns and commotion coming from the evacuation center on the bridge that is.

The trip here was also relatively safe, no real surprises there. Other than Kohta's nose bleeding on my back that is. But, well... I don't blame him. Four people on a bike after all, does translate to being stuck pretty close to each other. And Saeko decided to sit behind Kohta, the rest, sort of explains itself.

Now with Takashi being the only exception, the rest of the group had already moved inside. Takashi was still outside with me, moving the now silent bike towards the parking space behind the house. I had also given my stuff to Kohta as he went ahead of me.

I turn my head away from the house and look at Takashi while walking next to him.

(He actually looks much better now, considering how he looked before the outbreak...)

A couple of seconds later Takashi turns his head to me.

"Is there something wrong?" He asks as he parks the bike.

"Hmm... I'm just getting the feeling that you actually seem to be in higher spirits now. At least in contrast with how you looked back at school, where you wasted away at the stairs." I say as we park the bike, fold my arms, and start walking back towards the building's front door.

Takashi raises an eyebrow as he starts walking next to me.

"Uhh, sorry but..."

"You probably don't remember, but this ain't the first time we meet. We met once before the bus as well." I cut him off as I tilt my head.

Takashi just stares at me, seemingly in thought.

"Remember, no shit mode lasts forever. I guess it can always get much worse huh." I finish my sentence with a chuckle and turn to look at him.

And a couple of seconds later, he finally puts two and two together.

"Wait... you're, that guy?" He says, his eyes going slightly wide.

"Yes I'm that guy. Small world ehh, I'm actually surprised you remembered" I respond as I lift an eyebrow.

"Not many people spoke to me back then, and you kind of stood out." He answers as he scratches his forehead.

Before I could speak, Takashi continued.

"Look I'm sorry if I responded in a hostile manner back then. I was... not at my best. Also, thanks for helping the others after we split up." He then puts his hands in his pockets after he finishes talking.

"Don't mention it. Also, we were all helping each other, I did not go the extra mile or anything." I respond with a shrug.

Takashi was about to speak up again, when a wild Kohta burst through the front door, breathing heavily.

"Guys... you need to see this." He says as he points back into the house, taking deep breaths in the process.

(He probably found the metal locker with the bullets. No other reason for Kohta to be this out of breath over something. Not this early.)

Nodding to the excited Kohta I make my way into the house, Takashi following behind me. Once inside, I was about to ask Kohta where he left my bag, when I got distracted by a group of overly hyped girls near the bathroom.

"OHHH! I feel like I haven't taken a bath in months" I hear Shizuka squeal.

"Ughh, all this dried blood on my clothes is making me feel horrible, can we go already?" Saya 'asks' as she looks at the rest of the girls.

"The house has solar panels for heating water. So it should have hot water we can use right now" Shizuka adds with a smile.

"Well? Let's go already then." Saya groans as she starts walking into the bathroom.

After the girls left, while totally ignoring the three of us, we started going up the stairs.

(The girls better not use up all the hot water, or there is going to be a damn war in here.)

Going up the stairs, Takashi and I followed Kohta until he stopped in front of a door that led to a bedroom.

"There is a metal locker in here, and you won't believe what I found inside it..." Kohta grins as he grabs the doorknob. Going inside the room, Kohta walks up next to a metal locker and then turns to us.

"Bullets, there are bullets in here!" Kohta says as he points to the single open door of the double door locker.

"How about the other door?" I ask as I walk up to Kohta, already knowing the answer.

"It's locked, and that's what I needed help with. There's a crowbar in the unlocked part of the locker so we can use it to pry open the second door, and if there are bullets here, then..."

"I see shotgun shells. If there's a shotgun here, I call dibs. " I cut off Kohta as I comically crack my knuckle.

We were about to give the whole thing a try when. We heard the girls squealing from downstairs.

"They sure seem to be having fun in there," Takashi speaks up.

"Want to spy on them like real men?" Kohta asks.

"... I don't feel like dying yet," Takashi adds right after.

"Getting killed immediately is actually a blessing, considering that the girls will probably treat you like trash if they spot you. Good luck surviving in a group where almost half your team is giving you the stink eye. In any case, focus on the locker, or we'll never pry it open." I respond.

And just like that, we focused back on the closed door.

After shoving the crowbar in the gap between the door and the locker itself, Takashi and Kohta took position along the crowbar to push it.

(The crowbar is too small for me to also push, so I pull? That would mean that the guys will probably fall on me though...)

"Hey, Naier! Come on, grab the crowbar from the opposite side and pull. Kohta and I will push it." I hear Takashi say as he prepares to try

and force the locker door open.

I sigh under my breath and grab the crowbar, then prepare to pull it towards me.

"Three, two, one. GO!" I start a countdown and with the last number, I start pulling the crowbar towards me.

A few seconds later, the door gives in and flies open. I quickly let go of the crowbar and jump to my right. Kohta and Takashi then fly right past me, landing face flat on the floor.

(And time for Kohta to go nuts.)

"And, we got guns." I say as I look into the now open locker from where I was standing.

(Three guns, like in the anime, no wait. There's... more?.)

Kohta, upon hearing the word guns, springs back up from the floor and pretty much sticks his upper torso in the locker. He then took the M1A1 out along with one of its empty magazines, before taking some steps away and kneeling down with the weapon.

While Kohta was drooling over the gun I walked over to the locker.

(I am pretty sure that these were NOT in the anime.)

I reach in the corner of the now unlocked locker and grab a belt with two stun grenades strapped on to it.

(These will definitely come in handy. They are insanely loud, and would work excellently as a distraction. Shame there's only two of them though)

I quickly strap the belt on my waist before grabbing the shotgun.

"Called dibs on the shotgun, so... this is mine now." I say as I hold the empty M37 Ithaca with both hands.

Kohta turned to me, his face one like from a kid that just got a mountain of Christmas toys.

"That's a..."

"Shotgun" I butt in, trying to stop the oncoming nerd talk.

Not that it stopped him from starting a long-winded infomercial on the gun's attributes and the use it had in the USA military. While Kohta kept talking, I turned towards the locker

(Later in the anime the shotgun also had a sling. I wonder if they got it from here...)

I looked around the locker for any rolled up fabrics. And, I did find several in the unlocked part of the locker. I grab the slings and unroll them to check their compatibility.

(Three two-point slings and two three-point slings. We got more slings than guns... the two guns that the rest of the slings are supposed to go with are probably with Rika. No matter, I'm taking one of the three-point slings. It will let me have the shotgun hanging on my sides without needing to strap it on the backpack every time I'm not using it. The two-point sling does not let me use the shotgun instantly without needing to take it off every time I need to use it, unlike with the three-point one. So the three-sided one is better)

By the time I was done thinking, Kohta had already started taking the ammo for the guns out of the locker.

"Hmm, there's plenty of ammo here. Enough to last a couple of heated firefights." I say, looking at the assorted carton boxes filled with ammo.

"Yea... I wonder who's that friend that Shizuka mentioned. She has a small armory in here." Kohta says as he keeps laying the magazines and ammo boxes on the floor.

"Somebody we owe a big friggin favor to." I respond with a chuckle as I start helping Kohta with the stuff. Takashi joins in after a few seconds, and a couple of minutes later. Everything was on the floor.

"We'll have to manually load the bullets in the magazines now." Kohta sits down after speaking and picks a magazine to load.

"You would expect that there would be a weapon clip to load the bullets in the mags quickly with everything the locker had inside. But, well... I'm just looking a gift horse in the mouth now." I say as I sit down opposite of Kohta and start loading a random magazine with its appropriate bullet.

After a couple of 'which way does the bullet go in' questions from Takashi, the three of us seemed to have found a rhythm to the monotonous task.

"You two are pretty good at this. Have you done this before with airguns?" Takashi asks as he glances at us.

"Nah... Real guns." Kohta says with a smirk, and then he starts explaining how he went to America and was trained by a PMC instructor on gun handling.

(Right, they will probably ask me about it now. So... what do I say?)

After Kohta was done he turned to me.

"Actually Naier, when we went to the gun range, you did pretty good considering. Have you used guns before as well?" Kohta asks.

"Wait, you two went to a gun range?" Takashi asks, his eyes going wide.

"Then again you did say you helped somebody with taking videos for hunting rifles so I guess. It's not that far fetched?" Takashi pretty much 'answers' his own question.

"Yeah as for before, I did go to a gun range occasionally." Is all I said as I kept loading the magazines.

The other two, seeing that I was not going to speak about it anymore, just let go of the subject and turned back to loading the bullets into the magazines...

About half an hour later, we were done with the magazine loading.

Takashi was now using the binoculars to look outside. Kohta was just sitting down looking at his new toys. While I kept practicing loading a shell in the shotgun and then pumping it back out, then picking it back up again and loading it back inside, repeating the process again and again.

(I need to get used to this. This shotgun has no way to easily reload after all, except for one shell at a time.)

I had also already attached the three-point sling on the shotgun and was actually wearing it right now, to get myself used to wearing it.

A couple of minutes passed like this, until we heard the girls again.

"They are being too noisy." I hear Kohta say, turning to him I see his face had a frown on it.

"It's fine. The corpses do react to noise. But all the noise we're making right now is being drowned out by... " Takashi trails off as he speaks.

"The evacuation center on the bridge. There's going to be a bloodbath there sooner or later. Most of the people there don't even know what is going on, and by being loud they are pretty much digging their own graves. Just be glad you are here and not there right now, that place is turning into a coffin and it's closing fast." I continued his sentence as I got up, the shotgun hanging on my side.

"By the way. Kohta, where's my bag" Kohta turns to me after hearing my question.

"I left it in the next room along with my bag." Kohta says as he points to the wall behind me before turning back to Takashi who started speaking again.

"Alright, thanks." I say as I move towards the door.

I was about to open the door, when the doorknob started turning by itself...

(Huh? Drunk Shizuka alert? Isn't it too early for her to be here though? The guys haven't even turned the TV on yet... Uhhh, focus.)

I silently walk to the side of the door, so once it opens it will cover me behind it. And the moment I slide behind the door, my view gets blocked as it opens.

Peeking out from the corner, I see Shizuka creeping up on Takashi, slowly getting on the bed.

(For being drunk, she is awfully silent... Wait, is she going to stay there laying on the bed staring at Takashi until the whole event with the TV happens? Yeah... I'm outta here. Have fun you two.)

With that, I silently move out of the room, closing the door behind me, and start walking away towards the room next door.

(How the hell can somebody get drunk in hot water anyway?)

Reaching my destination, I stop in front of it and carefully open it.

(Empty. Ah, and there it is.)

Going inside, I pick my bag and put some shells I picked up into the side pockets. I then open my bag and check my extra clothes.

(With how long they took, I get the feeling I'll be taking a rather cold shower.)

Satisfied with what I saw, I leave my backpack back next to Kohta's. I then looked at Kohta's hiking backpack, the sight of it reminding what just transpired today.

(This is the first time I'm actually alone since this whole thing started huh.)

I walk to the window, taking a look at the distant lights on the bridge.

(The outbreak happened... and I managed to group up with Takashi and co. And now, I'm here, rather than there with the soon to be dead crowd.)

I let out a dry laugh.

(I am actually very lucky with how things played out. Even Saeko is calling me by my first name already. If that counts for something. How did I even manage that?)

I turn and look at Kohta's hiking backpack again.

(To think my starter plan was to get close to Kohta and use him as leverage to get in the group... I'm actually glad I'm pissed with myself right now for thinking of that. The guy probably sees me as his friend now. The least I could do is actually become one.)

I sigh and turn my head to the window and lightly bump my head on it.

(Come on focus. I think it's time to go and take that goddamn bath.)

With that, I turn around and grab my backpack, then exit the room.

(Maybe I should have taken more than just one pair of underwear and socks. Oh well, we will be at Saya's house soon if things play out like in the anime, and so far it seems like things are following that

track. Although, I wonder what will happen now that Shido does not have the bus. If this whole world is 'scripted' for things to happen like in the anime, then no matter how hard I try, Shido will just appear at Saya's mansion with something that can ram the barricade. God, I hope that's not the case... I mean, this whole thing feels... too real to believe that everything is scripted here, zombies aside.)

With that cheery thought in mind, I reached the staircase and started going down. Only to immediately pause as I saw Rei slumped on the bottom step.

(Right, of course. The stairs are Rei's territory. And she's half-naked... great.)

Probably hearing my footsteps, Rei turns around.

"Taaakasshiii" She groans looking as drunk as Shizuka.

(Again... how?)

She gets up and goes up the stairs, stopping a few steps away from me, then starts staring at my mask, hard.

"You are not Takashi..." She mumbles.

"No, I'm not." I say, trying to keep my focus on her face and not let my eyes wander.

"Why?" She asks.

"Huh?" Is all I can respond with, as I tilt my head.

"Why are you not Takashi...?" She asks again as she starts pouting.

I sigh and shake my head.

"Go home Rei, you're drunk." Is all I say as I move past her.

I could hear Rei mumble something behind me, but I didn't really understand what she said. Not that it probably mattered much.

(Still... I don't get that girl. Takashi is the only thing that goes through her head, yet she dumped him for his own best friend. If the outbreak didn't happen, she would probably still be with Hisashi. Girls are fucking weird... or she just needs a good slap in the face so she can start considering how others might feel. Oh, wait... she did get slapped.)

I shake my head again and move towards the bath.

On my way there I pass by the living room, with Saya on the sofa, her clothes and pose... not really leaving much to the imagination.

And I stopped in place and just stood there staring.

(You know, seeing this scene from behind a screen, and seeing it from up close is... oh, look... her cleavage is in plain sight.)

A few seconds pass with me rooted at the spot.

(FOCUS!)

I slap my face, aka my mask, then quickly open my bag, pulling out a sleeping bag. I unroll it as I walk up to her.

(I get the feeling that if she wakes up and sees me, she will actually get very pissed at me, because Saya.)

I then cover the provocatively sleeping girl with the sleeping bag. Thankfully all she did was moan, before shifting slightly until she got comfortable under her new blanket.

With that done, I quickly walked away until I reached the bathroom.

(This house. I swear, it's bad for my mental health.)

I stop in front of the bathroom door.

(Ok anime one o' one. Never, ever. Charge into the bathroom. Saya, Rei and Shizuka are out of the bath, as I have seen them. Saeko was not in the kitchen. Sooo.)

I take a deep breath and knock on the door, hard.

Nothing...

(I can't hear any movement from behind the door, so it 'sounds' clear.)

For safe measure, I knock on the door again.

(I must look pretty stupid right now...)

Nothing again... I steel myself and swing the door open, expecting a bucket to land right on my face.

(Empty. I watched too much anime...)

I laugh dryly and walk inside the bathroom after I left the shotgun, backpack and belt with the flashbangs on a nearby sofa, taking only my change of clothes with me. Entering the bathroom I close the door behind me and go to the sink, then look at myself in the mirror.

(Gotta' clean the mask and balaclava. And now I wish I had taken an extra balaclava, oh well.)

With that, I take off my mask. Just as I was about to take off my clothes, I paused.

(I will check the bath, just in case.)

I move away from the mirror and open the second door leading to the bath, then look inside.

(Empty. Ok,so... where was I.)

With the premise clear, I take off my clothes, throw them in the corner and walk to the bath, closing the second door behind me. Then move to the showers in the corner

(The bathtub still has hot water inside. But, I'm not aiming to take too long of a wash, so I'll just take a normal shower.)

5 minutes later.

I was outside the bath with my new clean clothes. Not that I looked much different, this set was as black as the last one, with the exception that I was also wearing a jacket with a hood.

Right now, I was cleaning my mask and balaclava on the sink.

(The balaclava is relatively clean and thankfully it does not smell, so I can probably get away with it.)

After I was done washing my stuff I strap them back on me.

For the finishing touch, after I put the mask back on my face I lift the hood over my head and look at myself in the mirror.

(Heh... Ten outta ten.) I chuckle to myself and lower the hood.

With that over with, I walk out with my old clothes in hand. Once outside of the bathroom, I give out a stretch and yawn.

(The water shower was still hot, and this got me way too sleepy. Well, better than being drunk. Too many half-naked girls around.)

I lazily walk to a window, open it and toss the dirty clothes out.

(Rest in pieces school attire.)

That done, I walked to the sofa I placed my stuff at and picked them up. I put the flashbang belt in the backpack, then I wore the shotgun sling and threw the bag over my shoulder.

Then proceeded to walk around the house aimlessly.

And with my brain not giving directional commands to my body, my other organs apparently decided to do something about it. More precisely, my stomach did...

As I ended up in the kitchen... The noise I made caused the only person there to turn to me.

Saeko was now looking at me, next to her a boiling pot.

And once again, I was standing there, just staring. Except this time, the other person was staring back at me and she was not drunk or asleep.

(Keep your eyes on her face... keep your eyes on her face.)

"The food will be ready soon Naier, hope you don't dislike Japanese cuisine." She says with a smile.

"Uhh, no, It's fine with me..." I say, frozen in place.

"You... ughh. Want my jacket or, something?" I ask her, trying to keep my eyes from wandering.

"Ohh... this? I couldn't find anything that fits me. I hope it doesn't bother you too much." She says looking down on her apron, tugging at it, before looking back at me.

(She HAD to ask that !? I swear she is doing this on purpose...)

I take a deep breath and decide to take the best course of action considering my current situation... Avoiding the fucking question.

"Soo... you want the jacket?" I ask again.

Saeko just giggles.

"If you don't mind, then please." She says as she lets go of the kitchen utensils and moves closer to me.

(I. AM. FOCUSED! I think she can see through my mask... FOCUSED!)

I take off the jacket after removing my shotgun and bag, and give it to Saeko. She takes a few steps back and wears it before trying to zip it up

And can you guess what Saeko has that I don't? A giant chest.

The jacket's zipper got stuck midway, just under her large assets.

The black jacket was now making the white apron that covered her chest even more pronounced than before.

And my eyes, attracted by the 'bright contrast' in its periphery, finally trailed down.

(Ohh, look... it's full moons tonight.)

Saeko probably bothered by the zipper, unzipped the jacket a couple of seconds later. Not that it mattered. The damage was done and my eyes were on anywhere but her face.

"Thank you Naier, I'll return it to you when I get my clothes back." She responds with a smile.

I don't know if she could not see where I was staring because of my mask, or if she just didn't care.

"Uhuh..." Is all I said as I slowly turned my sight towards her face.

"Where did you find the clothes anyway?" She asks a few seconds later as she looks at me from head to toe.

"I had a spare change of clothes. For the part-time job I mentioned in the bus." I answer.

"Ahhh, yes. I do remember you mentioning that. In any case, thank you." She says with a slight bow.

I nod like an idiot, and finally manage to take my eyes off Saeko.

And my eyes, much to my dismay, land on the staircase...

Where Takashi and Rei were getting REALLY affectionate towards each other. Like, I think they are actually making out right now?

(GIVE ME A FUCKING BREAK!)

I take a deep breath and

"Moom! Takashi and Rei are making out on the stairs again!" I shout, turning around and walking to the fridge, opening it and looking inside.

(Ohhh look at that, lime juice.)

I was expecting somebody to start talking. Yet instead, what I heard was. Dog barking.

I lift my head immediately from the fridge.

(God, at least let me eat something first damn it.)

I close the fridge and run to my stuff, taking the shotgun in one hand and the bag in the other. Then run to the stairs.

"Wha... what's gotten into you?" Rei asks, probably startled by my actions.

"That barking dog, it sounds close. Too close." Is all I said as I ran past Takashi and Rei, going to the room that the locker was in.

Going outside through the door-sized window, I see Kohta turning to look at me with a serious expression.

"Nice vest, please tell me I'm the only one hearing that barking." I say as I walk up next to him. Kohta shakes his head.

"It looks really bad Naier. They're gathering in the front of the house, a lot of them." He answers, gripping his gun.

I look down at the street as I nod.

(No rest for the wicked, huh.)

To the rescue

(It's not like I hate animals or anything. But goddamn it Zeke is really trying to get us killed by barking right in front of the house.)

"At least the corpses are not trying to get inside. Not yet anyway." I say as I keep looking below, at the corpses outside the gates.

"I know. Still, I would rather not have a horde of corpses right in front of my front door. For peace of mind if nothing else." Kohta said with a serious expression on his face.

(Well... I don't think it would really matter whether we had this horde here or not. The road is already crawling with corpses anyway.)

A couple of seconds later, I heard footsteps behind me. Turning around, I see Takashi.

"Hope you like dogs. Our little barking friend down there got us our very own horde at the front gate."

I say as I point behind me with my thumb. Then turn around again, and look at the rest of the neighborhood.

(I don't need binoculars to see how bad things are. I mean Hell, even if I was blind, I would still hear the occasional scream between all the moaning corpses.)

I turn my sight towards the bridge. Still filled with honking cars.

(And if I do remember correctly, the corpses are going to overrun part of the evacuation bridge. Things are probably really bad over there right now. Or they will be, soon)

I turn my sight once more to the nearby streets.

(Soon, we'll also have to save Alice. The group already thinks I'm not too keen on getting new members, as I pretty much said so back in the sports store after all. I guess, it's time to contradict myself like it's going out of style.

Question is, what do I do when shit does hit the fan?

While we do have one more gun that can kill from a distance, both the M1 and the AR-10 use the same ammunition. And as Kohta will need to go full ham and use a couple of mags here, if I join the party we'll be out of ammo before we can even blink. Not that I'm stupid enough to go out there unarmed though. I'll take the shogun and a couple of extra shells with me. Hopefully, I'll not have to use it, or worse, have to reload it mid-fight.)

While I was stuck in my own head, I felt a hand shaking my shoulder. I turn around to see Takashi. Looking pissed for some reason?

"Naier, can I have that shotgun for a bit?" Takashi says as he extends his arm.

Looking around I see that Saeko was also here, staring at Takashi.

(This, is where Takashi tried to go all Rambo, right?)

"You know how to use it?" I ask calmly.

"I... I can't just stay here and do nothing Naier! I'm not asking you to go out there, just let me have the gun for a bit." Takashi responded as he slightly glared at me.

(Ughhh... I really want to tell him that we can't save everybody, but in a couple of minutes we will try to save Alice, with me going along with it. I don't want to have to contradict myself 'that' hard.)

Thankfully I didn't have to opine, as Saeko spoke up a couple of seconds later.

"Komuro, did you forget that sound attracts them?" She speaks up before turning around, exposing her backside as she walked back into the room. Causing Kohta to nosebleed and Takashi to follow behind her, after looking at me for a bit with a strange expression.

(Well, that suddenly played out exactly like in the anime, weird.)

I shook my head and glanced outside.

"It's not like I want to leave people out there to die. But we won't survive an hour if we try to help every person in need. We will either run out of resources. Or die horribly while we're trying to play heroes." I say as I keep looking at the corpses that were now feasting on somebody's remains, and hear Kohta sigh.

"I know, but still, I... it's just." He stammers.

A couple of seconds later, Takashi comes back outside, binoculars in hand. I kneel down and sit with my back against the fence. I stayed silent as Takashi started speaking with Kohta, not really paying attention to what they were saying, already knowing how this would go.

Takashi then kneeled down next to me and started looking with his binoculars. I turn myself around and follow suit, sans binoculars of course. Alice would appear soon and there were more important things I needed to wreck my brain over instead of whether I'm being humane or not.

The fact that I was about to go into hugging distance from a large horde for example.

(Chivalry and goodwill ain't gonna do shit if I'm dead. Time to start worrying about how I'll stay alive while we try to save Alice.)

It didn't take too long after that, until I saw Takashi's head freeze in place. Turning my head towards the direction he was staring at, I see two figures walking into a house's yard that still had all its lights on...

As I did not have the binoculars, I could not see the event that would unfold as clearly. But, I didn't need to, for when Alice started crying her eyes out next to her dying father, I could hear her pretty fucking well.

And then, out of nowhere...

"Rock and roll!" A single shot was fired from Kohta's rifle. He then starts rambling under his breath with a grin, before firing a second shot.

And then another and another.

He kept on shooting for a few seconds, before Takashi spoke up.

"Hirano, what happened to not firing and abandoning people to save ourselves?" Finishing his sentence he turns his sight to me with a smug expression on his face.

(Yeah, yeah, rub it in won't ya. Be the hero in shining armor, I'll be the dark knight, I prefer black anyway)

"Dude! It's a little girl!" Kohta shouts as he turns his head at the two of us. His gun still pointing towards the illuminated house

"We are going to save her, right?" Finishing his sentence he also turns to me.

Now both of them were looking at me...

(Really now? Well whatever, it's not like I was aiming to disagree. It would not change anything either way)

"How many magazines do you have?" I ask as I turn to Kohta.

"Four, all ready to go." He says with a grin before turning his head back towards the house, taking a position to fire once more.

"Takashi, are we going to use the bike to get there?" I ask, turning my head to Takashi this time.

Takashi smiles and nods eagerly, before turning around, walking back into the house.

Before going through the window door, I turned to Kohta one last time..

"I would normally tell you to not get too trigger happy... But ughh, fuck it. Go nuts. I don't wanna end up dead because I told you to go easy on the bullets."

I see Kohta making a thumbs up, his face still glued to the scope.

I then turn around again and run into the house, to get prepared as quickly as possible. Inside, I grab a couple of shells and quickly load the shotgun to its maximum capacity.

(Five shells in the magazine, six with one in the chamber.)

I get up and grab another handful of shells and shove them in the side pocket of my pants. And then, I start running towards the lower floor, checking the shotgun's sling as I wear it. Getting to the stairs, I see Takashi on the lower floor, getting a handgun from Rei.

I stopped running and walked down the stairs as fast as I could. Dying by falling down the stairs is only funny in comedies after all.

"Do not rely on the gun. The sound will make them flock to you." I hear Saeko say to Takashi as I pass her by.

"If you think that little water gun Takashi has is loud, wait till you hear this thing firing." I say as I walk past her, lifting my shotgun with one hand, and stopping next to Takashi before turning around.

Saeko turns her head to me, but before she or I can say anything, Takashi speaks up again.

"Naier and I are going to rescue someone. And we're going to use the bike to do it, we'll be making a lot of noise anyway. Using the guns won't make much of a difference."

(I just hope with me on the bike he'll be able to drive as well as he did in the anime. In any case, time to be a hero, or die in the process.)

While I was deep in thought, I noticed that the rest of the group sans Kohta, was staring at me again.

(Wait, did they ask me something? Crap... I need to pay more attention.)

"You have the shotgun so I'll drive." Takashi says as he then turns around and walks to the door, opening it before walking to the bike. I nod before following behind him.

"So, I'm riding shotgun with a shotgun." I say with a deadpan face, not that they could see my face, mask and all.

Takashi turns to look at me without stopping. I just shrugged.

Apparently, while I was thinking, the rest of the group have decided on the plan of action. The plan being using a concrete slab with a wooden plank for a ramp in order to go over the wall of corpses that have gathered outside.

(I just hope the 'ramp' won't give way under our feet, or well, wheels... Ughh no, no thinking like that now. The whole thing will be hard enough as it is, I don't need to make it harder for myself by overthinking about what can go wrong.)

With that cheery thought in mind, I walk next to the bike and climb on the back, gripping Takashi by the shoulder.

"I hope your driving skills are as good as your enthusiasm, or we will be needing some saving as well." I chuckle lightly as I speak to

Takashi.

"Don't worry Naier. I got this." Takashi answers confidently as he turns the bike on.

(Sure you do, you even wheelie over a corpse and land on your ass...)

Rei and Saeko were at the gate, next to the 'ramp' and the corpses that were banging up against said gate

"I'm all set here, no more time-wasting Takashi. If we are going to save that little girl, we do it now." I tap Takashi's shoulder before cracking my neck bones.

Takashi nods as he wears a pair of fingerless gloves he picked up from god knows where before he starts revving the bike.

And then after a few revs, we blasted forward.

The bike speeds through the narrow driveway before going on the makeshift ramp and into the air. I turn my head to the left and look up at the second floor of the house.

"Kohta! Lock and load!" I shout as the bike flies over the two girls and the gate.

The bike then goes over the corpses, and lands on the asphalt a few meters away.

My grip on both the shotgun and Takashi tightens as he makes a sharp turn to the right before speeding down the corpse infested road. Takashi drove the bike between the corpses, making a beeline for the house where Alice was located.

All the while, corpses were dropping left and right from Kohta's handiwork. One shot, one kill...

(God damn. That guy can shoot.)

Getting near our destination, we see another wall of corpses ahead of us. Luckily, said wall was not blocking the door to the yard that Alice was in.

Nonetheless, Takashi pulls on the brakes hard, causing the bike to drift sideways before violently accelerating forward, towards the gate of the house. The sudden speed increase caused the bike's front wheel to lift.

I did want to warn Takashi that he would fall on his ass, but well, it was already too late. The bike was already on a wheelie, as it went over a corpse that was laying on the floor.

Not sparing any time, I let go of Takashi and jumped off the bike before I would end up falling along with him. A couple of big steps later as I bled the momentum, I came to a full stop, while Takashi went flying. He then fell on his ass as the bike flew into the wall of the house.

I ran to Takashi, grabbed his arm and helped him up.

"Still in one piece?" I ask.

He nods before turning to look behind me. I turned around to where he was looking. There was a single corpse, heading towards Alice, Zeke in front of her still barking.

(Seriously that dog is just drawing fucking attention now, more importantly though.)

"Takashi, get that corpse near the Lil' one, I'll get the ones near the gate." I say as I start moving. I lift the shotgun and look down the sights before walking towards the open gate. The corpses outside slowly shuffled towards the yard.

I point the shotgun in the general direction of the first three corpses that had just passed said gate, and pull the trigger...

All three corpses blasted back, accompanied by a deafening sound. Creating an opening for me to go near the gate and close it.

(The hell!? Is a twelve-gauge supposed to do THAT much damage? I expected it to knock down or kill one corpse. But It literally just sent everything in front of it flying!)

I thought as I ran to the gate and swung it shut.

(Well, I'm not complaining, I'm the one with the broken gun here. Also, five.)

I pump a new round into the shotgun and turn around. Takashi was going all out on the corpses to the left of the yard, keeping them away from Alice while Zeke kept barking.

On the right side of the yard, three corpses remained.

I raised my shotgun, crouched slightly then began to slowly walk towards the nearest corpse. Before I could even do anything to it though, it got blown back, blood splattering from the back of its head.

(Headshot. Nice job Kohta.)

And like that the other two corpses also drop motionless in a matter of seconds from Kohta's well-placed shots. I turn around towards our house and look in the direction that Kohta should be at and give a thumbs-up.

(Alright yard's clear. Now we need to leave, probably the same way Takashi left the house in the anime. As the shotgun alone should have gathered every single corpse near us to the gate.)

"Good job."

I turn to the voice to see Takashi looking at me. I nod and glance at Alice as Takashi walks up to me, the little girl walking behind him. I was thinking about what to do, when Alice started talking.

"My... dad." Alice breaks the silence as she looks at the dead body of her father near to the front door of the house. I turn around and look at the dead body then turn to Takashi and whisper at him.

"I suck at comforting people, I'll leave this up to you." I whisper to Takashi before walking away.

(Actually, the thing is... I don't think I'm 'bad' at comforting people per se. It's just that, well, when people I don't want to gut alive start crying right in front of me. It kinda makes me tear up as well. And so, knowing that Alice will start crying soon, yeah, I'd rather not join the waterworks.)

While Takashi was comforting Alice, I moved to the locked wooden door that led into the house.

(It would not be too hard to bust the door open. All it would take is one well-placed shot...)

I raise my shotgun and point it at the door. Through the corner of my eye, I could see shadows through the window, I could feel them staring at me.

(But, who says I wouldn't have done the same thing if somebody tried to force their way into my house. While nobody from the team knows, in the anime the father did shout that he will break down the door if they don't let him in. And he was not bluffing, he was about to do exactly that right before he got stabbed.)

I stay like that for a couple of seconds, before giving off a huge sigh. As I lower my shotgun and begin to turn around, I hear Alice start to cry.

(... fucking timing...)

I turn towards the window.

"You'd better find a better way to protect your god damn family! Lest someone retaliates from your fucking actions one day!"

I shout towards the window, and then turn around. I walked towards Takashi, who was kneeling down, hugging Alice as she wept.

"For a minute, I really thought you would shoot down the door." Takashi says as he looks up towards me.

"And so did I, but, I need the ammo." I say as I look at the metal fence door. Hands sticking out of it as it kept rattling.

"So, how do we leave? The front gate is an obvious no go." Takashi asks as he turns his head to the gate, or more likely, the corpses behind it.

"Can't we escape through somewhere other than the street?" Alice asks, causing me to turn my head to her.

While she still had tears in her eyes, she had stopped crying and was looking at Takashi.

"How about by flying through the sky?" Takashi says sarcastically as he sighs, looking towards the fence wall.

"Oh... !" And his eyes go wide a couple of seconds later. He then turns to me.

"Is your balance good?" He asks.

"Good enough." I replied as I let go of the shotgun, leaving it to hang on my sides.

"What's the plan?" I ask, for propriety's sake.

"We can walk on the fence wall to get over to the next house's yard." He says as he points to the medium-height concrete wall that separated us from sure death.

"Alright, I don't see any other option anyway." I said as I nodded to him.

"So... uhh, who carries the little girl?" I hear Takashi ask as he gets up.

And his question was quickly answered, as right after that, Alice got up and grabbed him by his sleeve, hiding behind his legs.

"Uhh... I think that would be you. I don't think she likes me." I say as I point my finger to Alice, causing Takashi to look behind him.

"Your mask... is scary." Alice says as she stares at me, still hiding behind Takashi.

I sigh and shake my head.

(At least she didn't call me a God frigging penguin...)

"You go in the front, and I'll watch your back. Do be careful, you have more than one life on your back right now." I say as I move to climb the wall that leads to the next house yard.

(This wall has fewer corpses on the other side. No reason to try and climb the wall that has a sea of death on the opposite side.)

I grab the top of the wall and lift myself up, then check the other yard.

(Well, while there are fewer corpses here, there are still too many for the three of us to sneak through. Walking on the narrow wall it is then)

I turn around to see Takashi carrying Alice piggyback style. He gets close to the wall and grabs it.

"Need help?" I kneel down and offer my hand. Takashi nods and grabs my arm.

"Thanks, man." He says as he climbs up and starts walking in front of me.

And like that, we begin walking down a narrow line.

(Fall to the left and it's game over.)

I stared at the seas of corpses left of me as they moaned and grind against the wall. And while said wall was too tall for them to climb, it was not high enough to stop the corpses from reaching for our legs.

(All they have to do is reach out. At least the wall on the next yard is a little bit higher. Still not enough to keep us safe from random hand grabs though.)

I grab my shotgun and aim it low to the left as I keep walking, keeping my eyes on the corpses down on the street.

(I just hope that if I use it here, I won't also blast my own leg off. This thing's blast range is not normal. Not for 'my' world's standards at least. And I never did manage to shoot with a shotgun at the gun range to check how destructive they were. Yet with so much power, shouldn't the recoil be as strong? Because it sure as hell didn't feel like it. I would probably have dislocated my shoulder otherwise.)

I turned my head to see Takashi stopping, we had reached the end of this yard's wall. Just as Takashi was about to walk over, the dog decided to do its part, and started licking Takashi, only for Alice to stop it seconds later.

"Thanks... Are you scared?" Takashi asks as he walks over to the next wall fence.

(Again, things are going exactly like in the anime...)

I turn my head and look at the cat that was sleeping next to us, not a care in the world.

(Cats gonna be cats I guess, no fucks given...)

I then turned my head and saw that Takashi was walking away. I proceed to also walk up to the next wall fence, catching up to Takashi. Who suddenly came to an abrupt stop. As I got near, I heard Takashi say something with disbelief in his voice.

"So, uh, how about you say that again..." He asks.

"I need to pee..." Alice replies with a meek voice.

(Oh... this thing. You know, now that I think about it. I 'could' have asked if anybody needed to 'use' the bathroom in a half joking manner before getting up the wall. Ughh... why didn't I think of this earlier.)

Takashi then starts grumbling, talking nonstop in a silent voice. Until Alice whines that she can't hold it anymore, with a rather loud voice mind you.

I look behind me and take a big step back. And like that, a couple of seconds later, I see Takashi's jacket becoming wet.

(Right... even if he won't fall, no reason for me to just sit and watch.)

I let go of the shotgun, letting it hang on the sling and wait for Alice to 'finish'.

And then, like clockwork, a female corpse's hand reaches for Takashi's foot, almost grabbing it by the laces, causing Takashi to lose his balance. I quickly took a big step forward and leaned my body forward. Taking the step with my right leg, my left leg staying in place for balance. And grab both of Takashi's shoulders.

"Whoa!" Takashi takes a deep breath as he holds Alice's legs in a death grip.

He turns his head back and looks at me.

"Thanks." I nod in return, and let go of his shoulders.

He then turns to the left, to the sea of corpses, then forward... to the end of the fence.

"Damn it, the fence ends soon... Where can we go now?" He asks rhetorically as he keeps staring at the corpses and the dead end.

(Ohhh, wait. I could use the flashbang.)

I think as I reach for my belt, only to grab air.

(That I left in my bag... that I left on the roof... Shit! Uhh, no matter, the group should come to the rescue any second now. They're supposed to appear right after Takashi starts staring at the horde.)

Yet, nothing happened...

Seconds pass... and the seconds then turn to minutes.

(For the love of. Out of all the things that could go differently, this had to be one of them?)

I grumble under my breath and look at Takashi. I was about to speak, when I heard an engine roar that was getting louder by the second. Followed by a pair of lights that kept coming closer to us.

I sigh in relief.

(Had to make me freak out first huh?)

I heard Takashi laugh as the Humvee closed in. Now that they are nearer, I could see Saeko standing upright on the humvee, Kohta under her.

(I'm actually surprised Kohta is so focused even with Saeko standing over him like that. Actually... What gun is he using? I got the shotgun right now soo...)

My question got answered when the Humvee started running over the corpses, stopping with a drift some feet away from the far end of

the fence wall we were standing on right now.

(That's the M1 right?)

Takashi was saying something, but I was too busy watching the whole scene unfold to hear what he said. The moment the Humvee stopped, Saeko jumped off and proceeded to wreck whatever sorry corpse was near the Humvee in the secluded part of the street.

"Hurry up Takashi!" I hear Rei shout causing both of us to snap out of our reverie.

"It's not that simple!" Takashi shouts back as he starts walking along the fence to the Humvee.

(Ohh, don't mind me. I will... just exist here. Bleh.)

I whine in my head as I follow behind Takashi. I also see Saya saying something as she pops out of the car, causing Kohta to grin and start shooting.

(Right no shotgun overkill. Oh. Wait!)

"Kohta, my bag, flashbang!" I shout causing Kohta to turn to me, nod and disappear into the humvee, only to reappear seconds later with a flashbang in his hand.

"Flashbang!" I hear Kohta shout as he pulls the pin with needlessly dramatic flare before throwing it.

"Cover your ears and close your eyes!" I shout as I cover my ears, only to see Takashi turning to me, his eyes filled with worry. He was holding Alice, who was using her palms to cover her eyes and her thumbs to shut her ears. If he let go of Alice to cover him self, Alice would fall... but if he didn't cover his ears, he would end up falling himself.

(Shit... SHIT, bad call. BAD CALL.)

"CLOSE YOUR FUCKING EYES AND LOOK AWAY FROM THE FUCKING GRENADE!" I scream as I closer and cover his ears and eyes with my hands as Takashi turns his head to look towards the right.

The last thing I saw, was Kohta looking at me, his eyes going wide before he also looked away and covered his ears.

(Ehh, at least the rest seem to know what to do...)

That was the last thing that went through my mind before I closed my eyes and turned my head to my right, trying to cover my left ear with my shoulder.

And then, a deafeningly loud explosion. My mind went blank for a second as both my ears started ringing. If my senses were bad with just my eyes closed, then now I felt like a fish falling through the sky.

Actually, scratch that. I 'was' falling.

(Not... good!)

The moment I hit the ground I open my eyes. A very blurry image of the night sky appeared along with a black blocky blotch on the lower part of my vision. Probably the wall...

My ears were still ringing like crazy, I could not hear a damn thing, and my eyes could only see blurs. Well, at least they are clear enough to see a couple of shadows standing over me, slowly becoming bigger and bigger...

Without much time to think, and with all of my senses being a jumbled mess, all I could do was act on instinct. My knees were bent, meaning I was 'stepping' on the wall.

I quickly put strength to my legs and end up doing a backward roll, until I ended crouched on my feet. I then used the stock of the

shotgun as I turned around, taking a swing and hitting nothing but air.

I took a few awkward big steps towards what appeared to be a house, until I reached the its wall, opposite of the fence. With a wall on my back, the corpses shouldn't be able to ambush me, even with my messed up senses.

(Come on god damn it! Clear up already!)

I slap my mask in frustration before looking back ahead of me.

All I could see is still a blurry hell. But, I could make out some shadows walking towards me. I turn to the fence wall to see a blurry blob on top of it.

(Takashi, he's still on the wall, good. Gotta tell him to move)

I shouted at Takashi to move, hoping that he could hear me as I could not even hear myself scream right now. And well, if the corpses weren't coming towards me then, they sure are now.

The shadowy blob on the wall then starts to move towards the right. I nod and turn my head to the shadowy figures that were approaching me. then checked my right side before walking to the right, circling around the shadows as I went wall to wall.

(Can't have Takashi behind these idiots, I might hit him with a stray pellet.)

After the wall that Takashi was on went out of my vision by strafing to the right, I lifted my shotgun.

(Even if deaf and blind, I'm still going to KICK- YOUR- ASSES.)

I pull the trigger and one of the shadows flies back meshing into the shadowy mess that I assume is the ground.

(Four...)

I pump a new bullet and turn the muzzle of the gun towards the next nearest shadow. I pull the trigger again and the shadow disappears just like the one before it.

(Three... I can't even hear the damn shotgun right now.)

I aimed towards the last shadow as my vision was slowly getting less and less blurry.

And pull the trigger.

(Two)

I counted the rounds as I pumped in a new bullet. I then lift my mask and massage my eyes with my hands

(I know this won't help but, uhhh come on, I need to be able to see. Even if it's night, the street is pretty well lit, and the area is quite open with no real bright colors to reflect the light from the flashbang. Plus, with all the corpses that were around the flashbang when it went off, they should have blocked some if not most of the light, add that the mask's visor has a slightly dark shade... come on damn it)

As I keep blinking, my sight slowly returns to acceptable levels. Still blurry, but I could now see the corpses crawling on the grassy ground.

(Ohh, why hello there dipshits.)

I lift the gun and point it towards the nearest one.

And with a pull of the trigger, the impact jerks the corpse's upper torso back before hitting the ground as it stops moving for good.

I then pump another round and lower my mask.

(One.)

I let the shotgun fall to my sides and look at the wall.

Takashi was not there.

(He probably already jumped to the humvee. God... I hope he had jumped to the humvee.)

I grumbled as I walked to the wall and climbed it.

Getting on top of the wall, I then looked towards the blob that looked most like the Humvee. I could see blurry faces looking at me. I think they're speaking?

Well, I couldn't hear jack squat.

(Let's see. Oh, there. I see Takashi, I think.)

I then turn around and look at the surrounding area...

(Man the place sure does look different now that everything is blurry...)

I then turn to the Humvee again, before looking down.

Thankfully my vision was clear enough for me now to see the thin wall without the danger of mistaking a corpse's face for a brick. I turned my attention back to the Humvee once more, I could see that the group was looking at me, mouths moving.

I take a deep breath.

(This... will probably be loud.)

And I shout that I can't hear a thing as I point to my ear with one hand.

I then start walking on the thin wall, and upon reaching the end, I see the gap between the car's hood and me.

(I need to jump. Oh boy... I don't think I ever felt so insecure about a fucking gap. C'mon, you can do it, it's just a small gap.)

I was about to jump when I saw the car slowly moving towards me. I lift my head to see Shizuka in what I suspect was a serious expression as she drove closer to the wall.

(Awww... ok, enough time-wasting.)

I take a deep breath, bend my knees. And jump.

I fly through the air before landing square in the center of the hood with what I assume was a loud bang. I lift my head as I get up and climb to the roof to see the group looking at me, their mouths moving again.

(Still can't hearrr yooouuuu.)

I say to the group that we need to get going before we get surrounded, and that I still can't hear a thing. I then walk to the hatch of the humvee and climb inside, the people on the roof following behind me.

After I take a seat, I let out a huge sigh as the car finally starts moving. Only for a pair of hands to grab my face and turn it to the left, where I found Saeko's face.

It was close enough for me to understand what her mouth was saying, even with my blurry vision.

Too close... now that I think about it.

(Are... you... alright. I think that's what she's saying?)

I nod and give her a thumbs up. She stares at me for a bit before she closes her eyes and lets go of my head. I then turn around to check the rest of the group's condition.

I don't know if it was because of the blurry faces, but they all looked kind of worried.

Even Saya, who was sitting in the front looked worried...

Saya... worried...

(Yeah, probably just my blurry vision playing tricks on me.)

And then, something else caught my attention, and it gave me an idea

(Hmm, I wonder...)

I start moving my head in a sniffing motion before stopping at Kohta and Takashi's direction.

And then...

"I MIGHT BE DEAF AND HALF BLIND, BUT MY NOSE STILL WORKS. AND YOU TWO... SMELL, LIKE, CRAP."

I say in a silent voice as I point my hand at the two of them.

(Ohhhh, I can hear myself speak again.)

Takashi and Kohta just looked at me in surprise... blinking. Alice, who was sitting next to Takashi, went wide-eyed.

(Ohh, wait... the pee incident)

"YOU TWO SMELL LIKE GUTS, BLOOD AND BAD DEODORANT. YOU HOBOS DIDN'T TAKE A BATH BACK AT THE HOUSE DID YA? "

I 'silently' ask as I lift both my hands.

The guys were starting to dart their eyes around in embarrassment. Alice, on the other hand, seemed to have relaxed a little.

And then the girls decided to do something that everybody knows is a bad idea. But then go ahead and do it anyway.

That being, checking the smell. And... they all ended up with the same reaction, hand to the nose.

I could actually see Alice giggling now.

(To think she can actually laugh when her dad just died what, an hour ago? She bounced back fast, too fast. Well whatever... mission complete.)

As the group started to relax, I closed my eyes. Shutting off the only window I had right now with the outside world that somewhat worked.

Before long I also realized something...

(I think I just cock-blocked Takashi here. I'm sitting between him and Saeko.

Also... I'm hungry. And God! My head hurts!)

Takagi Estate it is then

(Nope, can't do it. I just can't. No matter how much I want to. I... just... can't... Sleep!)

I was sitting between the Humvee's back seats. Awake, while the rest of the group slept soundly.

While I did doze off from time to time after we started driving. I kept having the same god damn dream, over and over again. Nothing scary like a nightmare mind you.

What I dreamed was, that I had a hat made of ringing alarm clocks strapped to my head. And while I knew it was a dream because of the ridiculousness of the situation, it felt 'real' enough to wake me up, every, single, time.

(Uhh, while I can see fine now, and my ears have stopped ringing. I still have a horrible headache. Probably the reason why I keep seeing that same damn 'dream'.)

I then turn my head to my right. Takashi was fast asleep with Rei sitting next to him, both covered under the same sleeping bag.

(Rei certainly did not miss her chance huh? Still don't understand what goes on her head though. Don't think I ever will.)

Actually. Now that I looked around me, everybody was actually covered with a sleeping bag. Even me.

(Somebody probably covered me while I was out cold.)

I sigh silently and turn my head towards the front seats. To the only other person that was also awake right now, aka. Shizuka, who was still driving, probably towards the river.

Saya was sleeping with Alice on her lap, in the front passenger seat. Kohta was, umm, on the floor next to Takashi, his back against the front driver seat.

(Saya sure sleeps a lot. She was out cold in the house as well. Heh, I would like to believe that she's less toxic towards me now. But she was asleep for half the day, and when she was awake, I was deaf. So go figure, I don't know either way. It's more like she didn't get the chance to be pissed at me. She did look worried back then though. Still, that could just have been my blurry vision, showing me what I wanted to see.)

Lastly, I turn to my left to see Saeko sleeping with her head against the window, also covered by a sleeping bag.

(Well, I did say that I would cockblock Takashi. Should I feel proud of myself now?...

But, you know what? I also realized that I was never present when Saeko and Takashi spoke with each other. For all I know, she could have already developed feelings for him seeing as things seem to be trying to stick to the events of the anime.

Ugh... The world has ended. I have killed things that used to be human without batting a frigging eyelash. Hell I might end up dead by tomorrow.

And what I'm actually worried about is whether Saeko has fallen for Takashi? I need to get my fucking priorities straight.

I mean, it's not like I'm any better from Takashi when it comes down to this subject. He wants both Rei and Saeko, and I like both Saeko and Saya. Though I don't think they know that, and I intend to keep it that way. For now at least)

Just as I was about to try my best to sleep and start a new war within my head, the car takes a sudden sharp turn to the left, causing me to almost fall on Rei.

"Oh crud" I hear Shizuka 'curse' before she starts looking to her left, and then glances back.

"Oh thank goodness. They're all still asleep. I'm still a teacher, I can't speak like that in front of my students." Shizuka says as she looks around before turning her sight back towards the street.

(Just a couple of hours ago we were on a killing spree. She herself ran over a lot of corpses, yet she's worried about swearing in front of us? Heh. Shizuka will be Shizuka I guess.)

I smile slightly, only to raise my eyebrow a second later. For some reason, I was feeling weighed down. And just as I moved my left shoulder, where I felt the weight, I heard a soft moan. I turned my head to the left following the source of the voice...

And almost bump my head into Saeko's. Who was now mere inches away from my mask.

(Well, I guess now I know how she ended up on Takashi's crotch in the anime. If Shizuka ended up taking that sharp turn off-screen in the anime like she did just now and he was sitting where I am now. Yeah, I can see it happening.)

I stayed like that for some time, staring at the beautiful sleeping girl. I don't know if it was because she looked so vulnerable right now. But, while something has been 'bothering' me ever since we escaped Rika's house. It was now starting to eat me from the inside.

(I made a pretty bad call back then, and I almost got Takashi and Alice killed with that flashbang...

I know that I don't want Takashi to keep being the 'protagonist'. Because I don't want Saeko and him to get together. The reason. Plainly put, I'm jealous.

But... What if she ends up with no reason to live if I try to interfere with the pairing? In the anime she chose to live on because she loved Takashi. She kept on fighting because of him. She didn't go batshit crazy because of him. And let's be real, if she already likes him, then trying to keep them apart is going to get her killed, or worse...

I already made a bad call that almost got two people killed, while in the anime with Takashi in charge, they were just fine. Who says I won't end up fucking up again and get somebody killed?...)

I let out a silent sigh and closed my eyes.

(Ughhh, fuck. Why does this have to be so fucking complicated?

I mean sure, Takashi ain't no angel either. Going for both Rei and Saeko in the anime. Or well, going after every single girl if we count the island ova.

But did he ever make a bad call? Because I don't remember him ever making one. And if he did, then my sadistic memory likes to watch me suffer by not letting me remember it.

Maybe... I should just sit back and let him lead on? Leave everything to play out like it did in the anime. That way I can be sure that the group will survive. But still... then... I...)

I take a deep breath, shake my head slightly and open my eyes.

(No... I'm not gonna think like this. For one, I know that if I let things play out like that, then I won't be able to stay with the group. I know myself, and I know that I will get sal... jealous. And probably do something very fucking stupid. Something that might get myself killed, at best. If I made a wrong decision, I will just have to make up for it. Saeko and Saya are the only ones that are 'worth' it in this damn shit storm...

Ughh, my head already hurts. And I'm not doing myself any favors thinking like this. I'm just going to burn myself out and still gain nothing out of it. I don't have time to beat myself with my own insecurities. If I need some proof that I did something good, then I just need to get my ass to Saya's house, and make sure that it will stay standing. So, focus on what's coming up next. In other words, Saya's house.)

I take my eyes off Saeko and look straight ahead, at the barely lit road.

(Saya's mansion. It will be the turning point for me.

If Shido appears there with a truck, if no matter what I do the truck still ends up crashing the barricade. Then there's a chance that the whole thing. No, that the whole 'world', is hard scripted to the events of the anime. And if after that we still end up with Saeko and Takashi splitting up from the group... I will then leave the group myself before they return. For their safety. And my sanity.)

I close my eyes, decision made in my mind.

(If Shido won't appear though, or if there won't be a truck to ruin our day. Then it'll be the proof I need, plus, it will be the first time I'll be able to take a real break. The whole mess with the adults versus us aside of course. Maybe I can get that training I asked Saeko for. Or maybe, even try to get Saya to be less toxic towards me...

Heh, yeah, fat chance. She actually gets even more grumpy during the time she spends in her home. I also have to check how Kohta is hanging on, his change from a passive guy to a guns-blazing maniac was, too sudden, even for him...)

As I opened my eyes after that thinking session, I could see the day's first rays of light.

(Alright me, new day, new problems. Whatever is bothering you, put it on hold and deal with it when the time is right.)

I spent the next ten minutes or so, looking at the rising sun, kinda funny if you think about it. Seeing the rising sun in the land of the rising sun...

And then, I heard a groan coming from the passenger's seat as Shizuka looked to her right.

"Ohh good morning Takagi." Shizuka speaks up.

"Morning... " Saya whispers groggily.

"How far till we reach the river?" She asks as she rubs her eyes.

"Five minutes or so." Shizuka answers.

"... Did the idiot wake up?" Saya asks again.

"Idiot?" Shizuka asks back, tilting her head confused.

"Ughh. Sepfier did he wak... " Saya turns to look at the rear seats as she spoke, only to stop mid-sentence.

"Hmm?... ohhhh." Shizuka, probably curious with Saya's reaction, turns around as well.

(My mask hides my eyes... right?)

"Awww, they all look so cute like that." Shizuka giggled.

(All cute? Huh, what?)

Seconds later, it hit me.

(Right, Saeko is sleeping on my shoulder and Rei is cuddled up to Takashi.)

I could see Saya, puffing her cheeks?

(Uhh, why is she looking at me? Don't tell me she's...)

"When he wakes up, give the idiot his sleeping bag back. You guys told me it was his..." She says as she gets out of said sleeping bag, carefully placing Alice on the seat, before moving towards the hatch that was in front of me. And as she opens the hatch and lifts her self up,

(Wait... that sleeping bag was m...)

she throws a kick, aimed towards my shin.

(The hell? Well that didn't hurt because I have the leg guards. But still... the Hell? Did she just kick me?)

I hear Shizuka giggling before she turns back to look at the front.

I stayed unmoving for some time, processing the information, only to notice Kohta as he started moving about. And a couple of minutes later he opened his eyes.

He groans as he looks around, his eyes stopping on me, then on Takashi. And then he just stops there, and starts staring between me and Takashi...

He sighs as his shoulders drop.

"Ughh. Why can't I have a girl cuddling up to me?" He whispers to himself.

(Actually bro, only Takashi is getting the cuddling treatment. Mine was just an accident.)

He was about to get up when Saya came down from the hatch.

"Ohh good morning Takagi." He says happily, his face instantly lighting up.

"Morning." Saya replies with the same grumpy voice as always.

She picks up the binoculars that were lying around and then lifts her upper torso over the hatch. Leaving her 'lower body' in front of me. And, just like that, another problem 'appeared'.

(The others think that I'm asleep right? Because right now, Saya has her butt half a meter away from my face... Gahh, it's going to be rather hard to uhh, pretend to be asleep. With that butt in front of my face!)

I close my eyes to avoid any, 'accidents', from appearing.

"Naier has still not woken up?" Kohta asks, sounding a little bit worried.

"Nope. You know, Takagi asked the same thing too." Shizuka whispers to Kohta with a giggle.

As I open my eyes again, I see Kohta turning to Shizuka.

"R... really?" He asks as his shoulders drop again.

(God damn it you airhead! That's not something you should say to Kohta, even if it meant nothing!)

Shizuka was about to speak again when something caught her attention, making her turn her head to the passenger seat.

"Ohh... good morning little one. Did you sleep well?" She asked softly with a kind smile.

Alice pokes her head out of the front seat, still covered with the sleeping bag, looking like a mini Eskimo.

"Good morning. Umm... I'm Kohta." Kohta said quietly as he turned to the side so he could see Alice from behind the seat.

"Alice." Alice replies while rubbing her eyes.

"I'm Shizuka. Nice to meet you Alice." Shizuka says cheerfully shortly after.

Kohta narrows his eyes for a bit, seemingly in thought.

"Hey Alice. Want to go to the roof? We can sing a song up there and we won't wake anybody up." Kohta whispers.

(Huh, so that's why they were up there?)

Alice smiles and nods a couple of times.

I could see Kohta was also smiling as he picked up the little one and climbed the hatch, causing Saya to groan as she also had to climb up in order to allow them to pass.

(Alice will be a big morale boost for the team huh.)

My view did not stay butt free for too long though, as Saya climbed back to her old place shortly after...

And a couple of minutes later, the Humvee started tilting forward, as it finally reached the riverbank and went into the river.

Not long after, I started hearing a faint voice... singing?

(This is where the anime episode normally starts, isn't it?)

As we passed the shallow river I could hear Alice singing, only to be joined up soon after by Kohta. Who was then shouted at by Saya...

"Hey guys, wake up we will be over the river soon." I hear Shizuka speak up, this time with a voice loud enough to actually wake 'us' up. And just like in the anime, Rei wakes up first.

She shuffles around, rubbing her head against Takashi's arm, before opening her eyes, then staring at Takashi's face with sleepy half-closed eyes, her expression slowly turning into a closed-mouth grin.

(Jeez... get a room you two.)

I complained as I closed my eyes.

A couple of seconds later I hear Takashi groan as he wakes up.

'Ughh, morning everybody.' I heard Takashi say as I felt movement next to me.

After a couple of seconds, I heard Rei giggling.

"Hey Takashi, look at those two." I hear her say.

I open my eyes and look at Rei and Takashi without turning my head.

While Rei was giggling, Takashi was staring at me, a slight frown appearing on his face.

(Oh no, you didn't just do what I think you just did. But anyway. Now, I can either 'wake' up and get this charade over with, or wait for Saeko to wake up first to avoid the awkwardness. For as much as I know, she might not actually want to wake up like this...

And here I go again. Shooting myself in the foot. God I swear, I am my worst fucking enemy)

"Wow. Busujima is really bold" I hear Rei say while giggling, a wide grin on her face.

(She really needs to be like that even if it's not about Takashi?)

Finally, as if hearing Rei's remark, Saeko reacts and moves her head a bit, before opening her eyes.

And then, she turns her head towards me. And starts staring...

(I am not sweating. Not at all...

Hey, Let's play a game me. Let's call it, don't freak out and stay still. Completely... fucking... still.)

Saeko finally 'wakes up', causing her eyes to go wide. She quickly lifts her head from my shoulder and looks around.

(Actually, she didn't drool this time around. Did the way she ended up on my shoulder closed her mouth?)

"Good morning Saeko" Takashi speaks up shortly after.

"Good morning Komuro" Saeko replies as she rubs the sleepiness out of her eyes.

(Saeko huh? So she did tell him to call her by her first name in the house...)

She then turns to look at me again.

"Naier is. Still asleep?" She asks.

"Yeah, he just missed quite the wake-up call, don't you think?" Rei says while staring at Saeko. Causing her to blush slightly.

"Cut it out Rei, it's not funny." Takashi says right after, Rei frowns as she turns her attention to him.

"So, should we let him sleep some more?" Takashi asks.

"Well. I don't see a problem with it. I mean... he is sleeping right?" Rei speaks right after.

"What do you mean?" Takashi asks as he turns towards Rei.

"Well... he has been asleep ever since he got back after falling from that wall? I mean... you know." She says a bit hesitantly as she glances at me.

"He didn't get bit, did he?" She finishes.

"If he was bitten back then, he would probably already be 'up'" Takashi says as he also stares at me.

Saeko then brings her face closer to mine. I could see her eyes looking towards my chest.

"He is breathing. He is not dead Rei." Saeko says as she grabs my shoulder and shakes me.

(Ok time to wake up before they end up putting a bullet in my head for good measure.)

"Ughh... No shaking." I say with my best 'just woke up' groan

"Naier, are you ok?" Saeko was the first one to speak to me.

"Hmm? Yeah. I can hear just fine now. My head feels like it got hit by a train though." I say as I move my neck, bones cracking in the process.

(And my neck is sore after staying still for so long. But they don't need to know that I heard every single thing they said.)

"You had us really worried there for a second." I hear Takashi say with a groan.

"Hmm, well. The whole thing was my fault to begin with. So it had to be me. " I say as I turn my head to Takashi, who had one eyebrow raised.

"Huh? what do you mean?" He asks.

"I was the one that told Kohta to use the flashbang. I also didn't take into account the fact that you could not protect yourself. So, as I said. My bad, sorry about that." I explained as Takashi was looking at me like an idiot.

"Uhh... well... "

"And so you took the hit instead of Takashi to correct your mistake. I think that is good enough for an apology. Even if it was, not a very smart idea." Takashi didn't even get to speak as Saeko intervened.

"Huh, stick around. I'm full of bad ideas" I say with a mirthless chuckle.

(Hmm, where have I heard that line before? It seemed relevant to my situation... something about zombies? Aliens... zombie aliens? Hmm, can't remember. Oh well...)

"You should be more careful Naier, you will end up hurting yourself if you keep doing such stunts." Shizuka says as she turns around, looking at me with a, frown? I think it was a frown, though she looked more like a pouting hamster to be honest.

(Well 'hurting' myself is putting it mildly.)

And with that done, the Humvee reached the end of the river, climbed a slope, and along with a little air time, it then landed safely on the riverbank.

Once we drove a bit further, and upon seeing no corpses around, the car stopped.

"Well seeing that it's safe around here, I think it's time we get a much-needed break. Because I for one, need some fresh air." I say as I look at the door behind Saeko.

Saeko nods and opens the door before stepping out of the car herself. I stretch in the car before also getting out.

(For a humvee, it's awfully spacious. I have already been in a military humvee in my uhh... old life? And let me tell you, these things, are a lot of things. Spacious, they ain't. It is weird, but this one has quite the open space inside for some reason.)

With that strange thought in mind, I scooted outside. And the moment I got out...

"Naier!"

I turn to the voice to see Kohta on the roof.

"Hey there Kohta." I say as I wave at him.

"Uhh, hey... I'm..."

"That nade was my bad call, don't blame yourself for it." I cut Kohta off before he can finish.

Kohta, along with Alice, were just staring silently at me now.

"Yeah the idiot is right. It Was, his fault." Saya says as she turns her frowning face to me.

"Good to see you too Takagi." I respond to her, before turning my attention back to Kohta.

(God, that girl is always grumpy.)

"I do agree with Takagi here though. That flashbang was my fault, so don't put the blame on yourself. I told you to use the flashbang and I almost killed myself because of 'my' bad decision, not yours." I continued as I looked meaningfully at Kohta.

After a couple of seconds, Kohta finally lets up his frown, and smiles with a sigh.

"Well. It's good to see you are not dead at least." He says, finally with an actual smile. I nod and then turn to Alice.

"I guess you still find me scary huh?" I say as I tilt my head.

The moment Saya saw Alice nodding, she snapped at me.

"Hey! idiot! What did you do to her!" Saya shouts, as she slams both her hands on the roof and leans towards my direction.

"Nothing! She just thinks my mask is, that's all!" I shouted back as I put my hands up.

"Then take it off, you nitwit! You have been wearing that damn thing ever since you found it!" She responds with a huff.

"Nope. Not gonna happen. The mask stays. Or what, you want to see my face that badly?" I finish my reply with a chuckle as I fold my arms.

And sure enough, Saya's face turned red and as she was about to start screaming? Shouting? Screamsouting?

"Well, it's good to see you three are fine. Now some of you might wanna start changing? I don't think you want to stay in the humvee with your previous 'clothes', no?" I say as I turn around and start walking a bit further away from the car. Ignoring whatever was about to happen.

And so, a couple of minutes later, the girls were behind the car. While the rest, aka Takashi and Kohta, stayed in the front. I, on the other hand, was by the slope.

(You know. It's 'funny' how when I was alone while the others slept, all that crap that crawled up into my head and almost choked me. And now, with everybody around, I feel like everything is going to be just fine. That... or I'm keeping my brain busy.)

With that thought, I slowly moved back to the humvee.

"Take one for the team, Takashi!" Kohta says with a grin.

(And some things just won't change huh.)

"Trying to get Takashi hated by the girls now Kohta? Uncool, bro." I say with a chuckle as I move closer.

"What? No, I was just... ehh." Kohta laughs nervously a bit before he turns to me.

"So, how are you? That flashbang, while going off in an open area, still went off still pretty close to you." Kohta asks with a serious expression.

"I'm fine, only a mild headache left. A headache that I suspect is more from the fall I took and not from the flashbang in itself." I reply as I massage my right temple with one hand.

"Still man, that was pretty amazing back there." Kohta exclaims excitedly.

I tilt my head, a little bit confused.

"Taking the hit for Takashi and Alice and then going all 'Blind and deaf I am still going to kick your asses!' Bang! bang! bang!" He finishes by trying to imitate some sort of badass Rambo?

"Wait, I actually said that?" I ask in surprise.

"Said? Man, you screamed it at the top of your lungs." Kohta answers as he starts laughing.

"Well, damn. So much for my silent persona." I groan with a shrug.

We continued chatting aimlessly for some minutes. Until Takashi got bored of sitting still and started walking away. Kohta and I followed behind him as he walked by the riverbank.

"So, the little one is named Alice huh." I say, confirming what I already knew to Kohta.

"Yep, Alice. Maresato Alice." Kohta says right after.

And speaking of the devil, we hear her calling out to, somebody she considers to be her big brother? Either Takashi or Kohta then. She's scared of me after all.

Turning to the source of the voice, we see the girls in their new getup.

The outfits they wore were exactly the same as in the anime. The difference being that Saeko once again, wore the guards I gave her in the sports store.

And after a couple of moments of staring at each other later, Rei speaks up. I couldn't really focus on what she was saying though, as I noticed that Saeko was walking towards me.

"Thank you for the jacket Naier." Saeko extends her arm, holding my jacket towards me neatly folded.

"Glad I could help. You didn't have to fold it though, I'm going to wear it now anyway." I replied as I took the jacket and started wearing it on the spot, leaving it unzipped as I pulled the hood up over my mask.

With nothing more to say, we just kind of stared at each other. At least until I heard Saya 'ordering' the men to check the top of the slope.

"Oh. I think that includes me too." I say as I bowed slightly and turned my back to Saeko.

(Uhh... Why did I just do that?)

With that small bit of weirdness over with, I walk up to the guys.

"Ya'll ready.?" I ask the other boys.

They both respond with a nod. With that, we slowly started to accent the slope leading to the road.

(Well I know it's clear but, uhhh. Yeah, there's no way I can explain that. Let's just play along.)

After slowly going up the slope, checking it and seeing that there are no corpses around, Takashi motions to the girls that the location is

clear. While he was doing that, I walked up to Kohta.

"You might wanna move a bit from where you're standing right now" I advised Kohta.

"Huh? why?" He asks.

"I don't think the humvee is able to turn while driving up here, and you are right in its path." I chuckled a bit as I pointed towards the car down hill.

Kohta looks at the car behind him for a few seconds before nodding, moving away from his old spot with me. And after the car climbed up the girls followed along.

Saya then checked the roads around us with the binoculars.

"Wonder where all the corpses went." I wondered out loud.

(Well they all went to the refugee camp, aka Saya's house.)

"No idea... but the bridge was attacked."

Saya says as she looks through her binoculars towards the bridge.

"But, there should be some cops left... right?" Rei speaks up as she looks at Saya with a worried expression.

Saya frowns for a bit before answering.

"Yes... Japanese officers are all about their work after all." She says with a reassuring smile towards Rei.

(Well, would you look at that. Saya being considerate of others for once.)

I think as I kept a look around us. Rei smiles and replies with a nod, trying to make herself believe what she just heard.

"So, now what?" I ask.

"Takagi, isn't your house near here?" Takashi asks as he turns to her.

"Yeah." She replies sullenly as she turns to Takashi.

"So that's where we are heading next." Takashi adds right after.

(Again going exactly the same as in the anime. I don't think I will ever get used to hearing these lines from them. Still, I should find a way to avoid the car crash and Rei getting the 'git gud or learn to fly' treatment.)

"Hey, Naier. Come on we're leaving." I turn to the sound to see Kohta waving his arm from inside the humvee.

I nod and run to the car, climbing inside. And with everyone back inside the humvee, we went off.

Rei and Takashi were now up on the car's roof, pretty much the same deal as in the anime.

Saya on the front passenger seat. Alice on the back seat with me next to her. And Kohta, sitting in the trunk of the car with our equipment, as the Humvee has an 'open' trunk that connects with the rest of the car.

(Why in the actual fig is he sitting there when there are empty seats? Oh well, whatever floats your boat Kohta. More importantly.)

I move to the center and lean forward, so I can be between the two front seats. Saya then turns to me and moves her upper torso slightly away from me...

"What, what do you want?" She asks me with a frown.

"I don't see any corpses on the road. I don't like it." I say to the two in the front seats.

"Huh, why? Isn't it a good thing that there aren't any corpses around?" Shizuka asks.

"No. Because there's no way they just disappeared, I don't even see any 'dead' corpses around. The corpses here are gathered somewhere. Somewhere with a lot of constant loud noise." I warned as I kept looking outside.

Shizuka opens her mouth to say something..

"Just be alert in case we have to react fast." but I cut her off.

And just as I finish my sentence...

"I see corpses ahead!" Kohta shouts while looking over me through the binoculars.

"Slow the car down!" I shouted towards Shizuka.

"What, why?! And don't shout next to my ear you idiot!" Saya shouts back at me.

"You want Takashi and Rei to be up there while we're drifting around the corpse infested streets?" I ask as I turn to her, pointing to the roof with my finger.

Saya just stares at me with the same old frown before she looks away with a huff.

"Fine, slow down the car." She says a couple of seconds later. And so, Shizuka slows the car down to a stop.

I then opened the hatch and turned to look at the two people who decided that sitting on the roof of a moving vehicle was a good idea.

"Oi Love birds. Get back inside, lest you literally fly off." I say with a smirk before going back inside. With Rei, Takashi following behind me shortly after.

"Alright, we are all set, let's go" I say as I lean close to the front seats again.

With everybody safe inside, Shizuka started driving, following Saya's instructions on where to turn.

"What the, we keep seeing more and more of them as we get closer to Saya's house." Takashi speaks up. Causing Saya's face to turn grim.

"So there's a good chance that there are survivors there." Saya's head then darts instantly to me.

(Takashi you dorkenstein, think before you speak)

"Think about it. Loud noises could draw some corpses, but there were no corpses for miles. Meaning there should be a constant source of noise that is drawing them all there. And a constant source of noise means that there is a higher chance than not, of survivors being there." I keep staring at Saya as I speak.

She just nods, and turns away. But, I could see an ever slight smile as she turned her face to the window.

(No matter how bad her relationship with her parents might seem in the anime. I know she loves them. She would not call out for them during her breakdown otherwise.)

While I was thinking, I noticed that the humvee was picking up speed, probably so to pass through the corpses. I also started seeing brick-paved walls from the side windows.

(Brick paved walls? We're here, now, the wires. I got Rei back in the car meaning she won't be able to spot them. Not that it helped her much. But more important than that, I must make sure that the Humvee won't crash into the wires and get totaled .)

I get up and open the hatch...

"What are you doing Naier?" I turned my head to the voice to see Saeko looking at me.

"I need a better view. " I say as I pull my upper torso over the hatch of the car.

(Ok... what am I looking for. A sudden break of corpses on the road could be where the wires are.)

I think as I keep looking towards the street, but I could see no real end to the corpses.

And as I was doing that, the humvee kept picking up speed. A couple of seconds later, we started colliding with corpses, the Humvee sending the ones unlucky enough to be in our path flying to the left and right.

(Ughh, I can't see it...)

I lower myself, until my head is back in the car, and speak to Shizuka.

"Can you go a bit slower? We don't know what's up ahead." I asked Shizuka.

"If we slow down here we won't have enough force to carve a path through all of them you idiot!" Saya shouts at me.

(Ughh, got damn it.)

I go back up with a silent groan.

(Ok, Naier, just keep yourself focused. It won't be hard to see it, as you know what you're looking for.)

I narrow my eyes and keep staring at the front. And then, I saw it. A sudden break in the corpses ahead of us.

(There!)

"There is a sudden break in the corpses up ahead! There's something blocking their way! Slow down!" I shout at Shizuka as I climb back inside. And finally, someone saw the fence.

"It's a wire fence!" Saeko shouts.

Shizuka hits the brakes and the car starts screeching as it tries to come to a stop, slowly drifting sideways as it keeps sliding towards the fence.

(Shit, shit, shit.)

I know I was faster than Rei in spotting the fence. But still, I could feel my heart beating down my ears as the wire fence got closer.

(Come on. STOP DAMN IT!)

The Humvee goes up against the Fence wall, pushing it, slightly. And finally stops.

(Ughh too close for comfort. But now, we have a new problem...)

Corpses. A lot of them. And all of them, turned to 'stroll' towards our direction.

"Kohta! Where are the shotgun shells?" I 'ask', as I turn to Kohta.

"In your backpack! As you are the only one with a shotgun, I left all the shells there!" He shouts as he gripped his gun tightly, staring at the oncoming horde from the side window.

"Good." I nod as I quickly move to the back and grab my bag.

While I was getting my stuff, Kohta went up the hatch and started shooting the corpses that were near the car. I opened my bag and grabbed the first box with shotgun shells I saw. then started loading the first six shells into the gun, I was about to take three carton boxes of ammo. But my eyes stopped on the grenade belt.

(This time, no fuck ups.)

I grab the belt and strap it on me. I then finally walked out of the door that was on my right, three boxes of shotgun shells in hand.

(I could use the flashbang right now and clear the corpses near the Humvee. But, if I did that now, the corpses that will arrive later will just waltz right into us. No, I need the whole horde to be here before using it.)

Not using the flashbang now, meant that we had corpses coming towards us from all over the street. With that in mind, I walk towards the horde before kneeling down, leaving a box of shells on ground, several meters away from the corpses.

I then run to the left of the humvee, towards the wall to my left, and leave the second box. Again, several meters away from the corpses.

Lastly, I sprint in the opposite direction to the right and leave the final box on the road. With that done, I was ready to get into the 'real' part of this fight.

All the while I did that, Kohta was blasting heads off, while Saeko had gone in close combat along with Takashi and Rei. Saya, Alice and Shizuka were left inside the humvee.

I get up and look down the shotgun's sight, toward the oncoming horde of corpses. The sound of Kohta's gun echoing as I looked at the horde.

(Too many to run over with the car, and more are coming. It seems that we just have to hold on until Saya's mother arrives. So, now. We kill.)

And I pull the trigger...

With a loud echo, two corpses get sent flying back, falling down motionless.

(Two down, an unlimited number to go.)

I turn my shotgun slightly to the right.

Pump.

(5)

And pull the trigger, three more corpses down. Blood splattering on the brick-paved walls to my right as the corpses behind my targets get knocked down by the flying bodies.

Pump.

(4)

I aimed straight ahead, took a step forward, and fired. With a loud blast, two more corpses down.

Pump.

(3)

I take a step back and aim slightly to the left.

I didn't even aim as I pulled the trigger, three more corpses down.

The blood from the corpses I had shot was starting to paint the street in front of me red

Pump.

I then looked to my left. Saeko was in the 'middle' of the road, holding off the corpses with support fire from Kohta.

I look back ahead of me. And pull the trigger, three more corpses down.

Pump.

I then turn to look towards the far left wall. On the far left, Takashi and Rei, had taken position, holding off the oncoming corpses.

I glance at 'my' side again, and pull the trigger one last time.

I pumped the last round out, kneel down and start reloading the shotgun from the box of shells that I left on this side of the street. With each new shell I put in, I looked back at the oncoming corpses...

After I finished reloading the magazine, I pumped a new round in the chamber, before loading in the last shell. I then get up and turn my back to the horde and kick the carton with the inside part of my foot, causing it to slide a couple of meters away, towards the humvee. I grip the gun's forearm and turn around, staring back at the incoming horde.

(If i keep it up like this. I will be able to hold them off from 'my' spot, even though they just keep coming...)

I raise my shotgun again, but quickly realize something. I did not hear any gunshots. With the gun still aimed towards the corpses, I glance back at the Humvee.

(Kohta is reloading? Can't hear him shoot. Saeko might be a badass, but without Kohta to pick off the ones that walk past her, we will get overrun. If one side falls, then we get surrounded.)

I sidestep to my left, leaving the gun to fall to my sides, and start running towards the center.

"Saeko! Switch! I'm taking the center!" I shout at her. I then instantly saw Saeko doing several back hops away from the horde, before turning her head to me. She then started running towards me.

(My side has them further back compared to hers, also she won't have to worry about 'both' sides. Being center is more dangerous, but I got a shotgun.)

The moment she got close to me, she slowed down and turned to me.

"Be careful Naier" She says before she starts running again, moving towards the spot I was in before.

"You be careful. I got a fucking shotgun with a crapton of ammo." I say under my breath as I keep running towards the center...

After I reached the ammo box I left in the center, I turned to the horde.

They were near, almost in my face type of near.

Just as I aim down the sights, I see a corpse in front of me getting blown back, blood pouring out of a new hole in its head like a fountain...

"Kohta! Support Saeko on the right! I got this spot covered."

The moment I finished shouting, I restarted the massacre.

One pull of the trigger. Four corpses down.

Pump.

(5. As long as I got ammo left, you fuckers ain't taking a step towards my car.)

I fire another cheaply aimed shot towards my right. Three more corpses down.

Pump.

(4)

I turn to the left and fire, two more corpses down.

Pump.

(3)

I stop aiming and just point my shotgun towards the mass of corpses, and pull the trigger. Three more corpses down.

(It's near impossible to miss with this many ahead of me.)

Pump.

With each shot the wall was being pushed back, slowing down. Albeit, only momentarily.

Each corpse I sent flying back would fall on other corpses, causing all of them to fall to the ground. Each mount of corpses would then cause the ones behind them to either trip and fall, or to slow down to a crawl as they stumbled on the fallen corpses.

I shake my head and look down the sight. And with a quick motion, fire, pump and re-fire the last two rounds in the gun.

(0. There's no fucking end to them)

I look around me to see the ammo carton to my right, some meters away from me.

(When did I walk away from the box?)

"Reloading!" I shout to Kohta as I run to the carton, stopping with a slide as I grab it.

I open the box and start loading new shells into the gun, keeping an eye on the horde after each new shell. After I was done I kicked the carton back towards the humvee the same way I did with the last one.

I then glance towards Saeko to see how she's holding on to the right. And judging from her constant movement, counters, and number of bashed heads around her?

(She's holding up fine.)

Then I turn my attention to the left.

From where I was standing, I could see that corpses had already walked past the 'defense line'. If I counted the ammo cartons I left on the ground as a 'defense line' that is.

"Takashi, Rei get over here! I'm taking your spot!" I shout out at the two as I start moving towards the left.

Looking at the left side I could see even more corpses than before. Actually scratch that... I could see more corpses coming from all sides.

(Come on! Saya's mother better be here soon!)

As I run towards the left, Rei and Takashi run past me. I kept my sight focused towards the horde that had shambled past the 'defense line' as I kept running. Once a couple of meters away from the horde, I stop dead in my tracks, then aim down the sights.

Right now I had the main part of the 'left' horde to my right. Ahead of me I could see a smaller cluster of corpses which had already stumbled past me. The left side led to the fence. Thankfully, it was still clear of corpses.

I quickly fire a shot, chest height, aimed towards the main horde to my right. The shot caused several corpses to be blown back, and in the process, the other corpses behind them to either fall on each other or sidestep away from the direction they were going.

I pump a new round and turn back towards the group ahead of me, which was now looking straight at me.

Pump.

(5.)

I start walking straight towards the corpses.

(The blast from my last shot caused the corpses on the right side to fall back some, so I won't have to worry about the right for a few seconds.)

I aim at the corpses ahead of me. Then shoot, again at chest height. And another group of corpses gets blasted back.

Pump.

(4. I need to clean them from the ammo carton, or at least get it out of their shambling feet)

I think as I pump a new round in the gun. The box with the ammo was now almost a meter away from me. I aim the shotgun straight ahead once more, and pull the trigger.

I pump a new round and instantly pull the trigger again.

Another chest shot on the corpses ahead of me, and a new round in the chamber.

Pump.

I drop the gun to my sides and run to the box of shells. With all the knocked down corpses, the box was under a pair of feet right now. Thankfully, feet don't bite, yet...

I kick said feet away and kneel down, grabbing the carton. I then hug the shotgun and roll towards the fence, dodging a few wandering hands.

Once I felt the ground on my feet I stand up straight and turn around pointing the shotgun with one hand, the box held with the other.

(This will be one inaccurate shot. Not that it matters much, there's a fucking wall of corpses here.)

Another loud blast echoed Pump

The recoil was enough to cause my arm to bend, the shotgun almost hitting my face as corpses got sent flying back. It had reached the point. that I could just blind shoot towards the horde, and all the pellets would still find a target...

In other words. It was time for plan two.

(Too many of them...)

Box of shells still in hand, I ran to the humvee.

"Kohta! Cease fire, cease fire!" I shout as I open the humvee's door and throw the ammo box inside before slamming the door shut.

"What! Are you crazy!?" Kohta shouted back at me, I could see a hard glare on his eyes. I pull the flashbang out of the belt's pocket, and show it to him.

"Yea, I fucking am." I respond as I climb up the humvee from the hood. Kohta looks at the flashbang and nods. He then goes back inside the car as he turns the safety on his gun.

"Everybody! Back in the car. Right now!" I shout at Takashi, Rei and Saeko.

I saw Rei and Takashi looking at me for a split second before they turned their heads back towards the horde. Saeko was, probably too aroused to even hear me...

(Oh for fuck's sake you hillbilly berserkers!)

"Get back to the fucking car! I'm not taking another flashbang in the face for your sorry asses!" I scream as loud as I can, raising my hand and waving the flashbang in the air.

This time the three reacted appropriately and started running back towards the humvee...

And the moment the last person reached the car, I prepped the flashbang.

"Eyes shut, ears closed." I say in a calm voice and pull the pin.

"And you shitheads, can go... Deaf!" I shout as I toss the flashbang as far back from the horde as possible.

I quickly duck and cover my ears while I turn my upper body towards the fence, my eyes closed. And then, not a second later, a dull sound echoes in my head for a couple of seconds.

I open my eyes, shake my head, and look back. Heart beating like a drum in my chest.

(If this didn't work, we are screwed. In more ways than one.)

I stared at the horde of corpses, as they slowly started turning around. Walking in the opposite direction of the fence, of us. I nod and climb back inside the car, shit-eating grin on my face and all.

Yet, I didn't even manage to sit down before Kohta started being 'noisy'. Good thing the car has some basic soundproofing. I hope...

"I can't believe that actually worked!" Kohta shouts with a loud voice, still looking at the horde as it shambled away.

"Please. My ideas might occasionally be made out of stupid, but it's the working type of stupid." I respond with a shrug.

"Occasionally?" Saya says as she turns towards me with a slight smirk and one eyebrow raised.

"We're still alive ain't we? And this time around, nobody went blind, or deaf, or worse. I call this a win." I respond as I turn to Saya, slightly raise both my hands and shrug.

"But what do we do now?" Saeko asks shortly after.

"We wait for them to leave and then drive away?" Shizuka adds on.

"The fence. Maybe there are survivors on the other side?" Saya asks as she stares at the other side of the fence.

(We should have Saya's mother to the rescue soon. Or not. We are safe enough to wait here so it doesn't really matter.)

"I think we should wait for now, shut down the car engine so it won't attract any more corpses on us. And after the coast is clear, we'll see what we'll do." I respond as I look past the fence.

And like that, a couple of minutes passed with the engine turned off, and us staying as silent as the grave. Even if Kohta's initial shouting was proof enough the corpses ignored us, or did they actually go deaf?...

Until finally. A sound other than the moaning of the distant corpses was heard. A knock on the window, from the side of the fence. The whole group jumped in surprise, only to see a person in a firefighter suit waving at us.

(We made it..)

The group starts smiling, and the smiling then turns into cheering as they open the hatch and climb outside. It seems that there's a whole group of people in firefighter suits on the other side of the fence. Again, just like in the anime.

The people in the suits then helped us to get on the other side of the wire fence. And once we were all over, Shizuka walked up to the one that was apparently giving the orders.

"Thank you for saving us." She says as she takes a deep bow.

The person whom Shizuka was speaking to then proceeded to remove the helmet of the suit. Revealing it to be none other than Saya's mother.

"There is no need for that now, it's only natural to help my daughter and her friends after all" Saya's mom responds with a smile.

(And we, are, done. I wonder, should I ask Saeko to train with me tomorrow? I'll also need to make sure Kohta won't get bullied with the gun business. As for Saya, well she will be extra grumpy now soo. Yeah, good luck with that me. Rei and Takashi will probably do, 'stuff'?)

"That being said. Who is, Naier Sepfier?" Yuriko, aka Saya's mother, asks as she looks at the group, her sight stopping on me.

(Hmm, she knows my name... Wait. She knows my name? Why the hell does she know my name?)

I raised my hand and. I didn't even manage to speak before I found myself surrounded by the people wearing the firefighter suits.

(Oh, This... can't be a good sign)

Yuriko then walks up to me. And seconds later. I was staring down the barrel of her luger.

(Does this have something to do with my debts? I mean Saya's family is filthy rich. Wouldn't be surprised if she owned a bank or two.)

"So, you are the one who placed my daughter in needless danger." She says as her eyes turn into a cold stare.

(I, did, what?)

Was all I could think as I slowly raised my other hand...

The rest of the group was now talking? Shouting? I couldn't really tell. Too focused on the gun aimed at my head.

(What... the... fuck?)

New house, new problems

(Well, it's official. My life... sucks.)

I sigh as I look around the empty room for the millionth time. Right now, I was locked in what seemed to be an empty bedroom on the second floor in Saya's 'house'.

(At least, I managed to get here..)

I think as I look at my right hand, that was handcuffed to a hole in the table in front of me

(At least I'm not in an actual cell. I got a big ass window on my back to let the sunshine in...)

I sigh and hit my head on the table.

(God this is a pack of bullshit.)

I could feel the cold wood on my cheek as I took a deep breath.

(After Saya's mom went all American Cop on me, they separated me from the group and took me here. While I understand why they took all of my equipment. Did they really have to take my mask too? I liked that mask...)

I lift my head slightly only to bump it on the table again.

(Ughhh... I was planning on having a break here. So give me a fucking break.)

I let out a dry laugh as I lift my head and look around the room one more time.

(I have been sitting here for god knows how long after Yuriko, aka Saya's mom, decided to arrest me for... endangering the group?

What sort of holy crap is that anyway? We are in the middle of a god damn zombie outbreak people, get with the times.)

I gave my handcuffs a couple of light tugs, when I heard the door open. I turned my head to see Yuriko walking inside. She closed the door behind her and walked to the other side of the table, before taking a seat herself. She then started staring at me in silence...

(Oh great. Now I'm in a fucking detective movie.)

We stayed like that for a couple of minutes, just... staring at each other.

(Does she have to stare so hard?)

"So, uhh... what now? You're going to execute me or something?" I ask jokingly.

"It's one of the debatable options." She answers calmly as she keeps staring.

(She's joking. Right?)

I sigh at her response...

"What do you want from me then?" I ask. And before she could speak up, I continued.

"Because I don't think you came here just to stare at me..." I lean back on my chair as I switch my glance to the handcuffs on my hand.

"Indeed I did not Sepfier. I'm here for a reason." She says as she folds her arms under her chest and leans back on her chair as well.

"I'm here so we can decide what we will do with you." She says as she keeps staring at me.

(We? Isn't Saya's father supposed to be at a powerplant or something? Actually, why the fuck does she know my name in the first place? Not many people should know it. Other than my group, that did not have any contact with her up until now, my 'family' that is on the other side of the globe and...)

The door then opens once again. And a certain, snake faced, glass toting, suit-wearing slimeball walks in.

(Shido... I know, I shouldn't be surprised... But. How. The. Hell? In the anime he arrived right before the nuke blast, so he is here way too fucking early. Ughh, and let me guess, he is somehow connected to the reason as of why I'm sitting here right now. Why can't he just, fade out from existence or something?)

"Well, I certainly didn't expect to find you here. Sepfier." Shido speaks up, his signature 'I eat shit' grin plastered on his face

"You and me both..." I answer as I keep staring at him..

"Ohh, how the people of this mansion barely dodged a disaster. How lucky they are that I managed to arrive here before you, and warn them of you and what you did to us" Shido puts his fingers on his forehead as he speaks with a rather dramatic flair.

"Sure, yeah. I'm sure you told them the one and only truth. Still, riddle me this. Seeing as I'm chained up to a table and pretty much pose no threat any more. How the hell did you manage to get here before me?" I ask as Shido moves to sit next to Saya's mother.

"Ah, I have to thank you for that Sepfier. Had you not tried to kill us all, I would have never managed to get here in time." Shido speaks up, smugness pretty much oozing out of his mouth.

"Huh, care to explain that to stupid ol me?" I say with a sarcastic tone as I lift an eyebrow.

"Well you see Sepfier. After you sabotaged the bus, after you caused the split and after you abandoned us back there and left us for dead, we became stranded. We had to go on foot because of you for... I can't even recall how long. Thankfully, we were rescued by the esteemed gentlemen from the Takagi Estate, alas not all of us were so lucky. While I did my very best to protect my dear students, Thanks to you. We had casualties. Casualties that could have been easily avoided have you not acted so irrationally. I'm just glad that, the poor souls that you have dragged with you on your merry journey are still all safe. I could not bear it, were I to lose any more of my dear students because of you" Shido was really starting to get into it, by now and was speaking with such passion, such flare...

(Such grandiose bullshit. I asked him how he got here, not to spin me his tale of gory)

"Until, as luck would have it. We crossed paths with an armed group. They helped us get here. Really fortunate, these kind people, that I managed to warn them about you. Who knows what you would have done to these poor souls if I was not present to warn them of your ways." Shido then grinned as he kept looking at me.

('Helped' huh. I wonder if your female students 'helped' them make their decision to pick sorry sorry ass along. Seeing how you turned the bus into a fuckfest in the anime, I won't really be surprised if you used some similar tactic now as well. I would also go on a limb and say that these guards are also on his side now. God I want to strangle him so bad.)

"But, unlike you, I'm not a monster. I shall leave the good people of this fine community to decide your fate." He says with a grin.

"Sure. fill them with your bullshit, then let them stain their hands for you. Sick fuck." I growled under my breath so nobody could hear me.

"What was that Sepfier?" Shido leans forward as his smug grin gets wider than ever.

"I said... this is a free country, so I don't see a problem with that." I say as I try my best to keep my face straight. Shido just keeps grinning as he gets up and turns around, exiting the room from the same door he entered.

And the moment the door closed. I breathe out.

"Well, shit" I turned to Yuriko as I spoke.

"So, when am I getting executed?" I ask sarcastically.

"As he said, this is for the people to decide..." She says as she keeps a serious face.

"Ohh please. For the people to decide? That guy is a politician in a crocodile's skin. I wouldn't be surprised if he has every single idiotic refugee mesmerized with his bullshit." I say as I glare back at Saya's mother.

Yuriko opens her mouth to speak...

"And why in God's name he seems to be the one calling the shots here? Last time I checked this was the 'Takagi' estate, shouldn't you or your husband be the ones calling the shots here?" But I cut her off as I continued talking.

Finishing my tirade, I slump back on my chair. Yuriko stares silently at me for some time. She keeps looking at me until... She lets out a tired sigh.

"I would like to believe that you are smart enough not to buy into that guy's bullshit. While I did cause the initial group to split and I did sabotage the bus. I did it because it was a necessity. That man is far more dangerous than I am" As I keep talking Yuriko gets up, turns around and walks towards the door...

(Welp... I'm fucked.)

And locks it.

(... ehh?)

She then returns and sits on the opposite side of the table once again.

"I was not born yesterday Naier. I have dealt with characters like Shido longer than you could even imagine." She says as she smiles slightly.

(She's talking about the time she worked as a stockbroker? Probably. Actually that is also the reason why I hoped that she wouldn't be swayed by that sleazebag.)

"Then, what's with all this? If I were to believe that you don't buy into his crap, why do you and your husband let him stroll around like he owns the place? Why did you friggin arrest me?" I ask incredulously.

She sighs before looking straight into my eyes.

"Because. Because my Husband is gone... " She says as she keeps looking at me, her eyes leaking a bit of sadness.

(Wait, what?)

"A couple of days ago he and a team of engineers went to fix a nearby power plant. And two days ago a group of guards that went with them as protection, returned without the rest. Almost half of the guards that were part of that team were gone, along with Souichirou and the engineers. They told us that the facility was overrun by the infected." Finishing her story, she then takes a deep breath.

"As for the reason why this Shido character has so much influence now. It's practically my fault." She says. I tilt my head to the side and raise an eyebrow.

"You were not wrong about him acting like a politician, because his father is one actually. And as you yourself have experienced, he is

quite the talker, even charismatic in his own way. Perfect to sway the masses when they are in need of somebody to believe in.

He was here less than a day and almost all of the refugees outside are now under his sway... All the while he was gaining influence, I was trying to put together a rescue team to head to the power plant. And without a figure to counter his influence, without Souichiro to lead the men. I have practically lost control. As for why I arrested you. Well, so far Shido has found no opposition from me, he probably thinks I'm a pushover. This is why I acted as I did and captured you. If he thinks I'm no threat, or if he thinks that I'm on his side. Then he won't get in my way." After she finishes she leans forward and rests her hands on the table.

"Out of curiosity, the returning guards. Same guards that found Shido and his group?" Yuriko just nods to my question.

"Oh for fuck's sake. Why does this guy bring trouble wherever he fucking treads, pardon my french" Yuriko just chuckles as I plant my face on the table.

"If my husband was here, he would be able to do something about all of this as he holds far more power than me. And well, more importantly, the other armed personnel would listen to him without question." Her face returns to a serious expression as she talks

"You mentioned something about a rescue. When will that happen?" I ask as I lift my face from the table.

"Tomorrow." She answers bluntly.

"Yea... no. I'll be dead by then if we let Shido do as he pleases." I say as I lower my head to the desk once more, resting my chin on it.

"Ughh. Anyway, how are the rest?" I ask, my head still on the desk.

"The rest?" She asks back.

"My group, the ones I, endangered, you know." I say as I keep my face on the desk.

"They are fine. They went to sleep an hour ago or so." She answers.

"I see. At least they are taking this whole situation well." I say as I lift my head and look down at the table.

(Also considering that the group, in the anime, ended up fighting with each other here. It's not so bad. What with Saya going off about how her parents left her for dead. Kohta going ballistic on Takashi because he kind of manhandled Saya. And Shizuka being, uhh, I don't know. Midlife crisis mode?

I guess if they are too busy with my sorry ass it keeps them from going after each other's asses... Heh. Uhh... Wait...)

"An hour ago? How long have I been locked up in here?" I ask as I lift my sight from the desk and look at Yuriko.

"About, four hours I think? And as for them taking your imprisonment well. Honestly, I think they just got exhausted after screaming at me for so long.

I mean, even if I did believe Shido, with how much Saya shouted at my ear to release you. You can't be that bad if my daughter is so fond of you." Yuriko smiles as she finishes.

"Hhmm... yeaaa... whut?" I blink several times as I keep staring at the woman.

"I think you're probably mistaking me for Takashi. I'm the guy who she doesn't even remember by name, with how she keeps calling me an idiot all of the time." I say as I stare at her.

"Hmm Takashi... Ahh, yes her childhood crush. Turned out to be quite one-sided from what I see. For all the smarts my daughter says she has, she really can't bring herself to understand how she needs

to act towards the guy she likes. A real shame really." I just sat there staring while Yuriko kept talking.

She looks at me for a few seconds, before putting her hand over her mouth as she lets out a giggle.

"Whats with that incredulous look on your face? I'm her mother you know. Of course I would understand things like that." She says as she tilts her head, expression full of mirth.

"Ummm. Yes, of course. So uhh, can we get back to how I will be dead before sundown?" I say as I scratch the back of my head with my free hand.

Yuriko, still smiling, starts speaking again.

"Don't worry, I'm still a Takagi and this still is my house, I won't let anybody execute you" As she finishes she folds her arms under her chest.

"And then Shido would use your refusal for cooperation as a reason to turn the masses against you. No, that won't work, we need another plan. Other than actively opposing him and his merry midgets." I say as I put my free hand under my chin.

"Just to be clear. You will help me if need be, right?" I ask, as Yuriko just nods in response...

I then lower my head and close my eyes.

(Ok... I need a plan. First of all, I need to curate the current state of things...

My group is asleep, or so Yuriko says. In either case, they are probably out of action and can't help me right now.

Shido has managed to brainwash the hippie wannabe protestors and a group of armed guards with his bullshit. The guards probably had

an extra helping of Yuuki, though that's just speculation, maybe they were just that gullible.

More importantly, said masses of idiots will probably want me dead or exiled if they believe I'm what Shido portrays me as. Yuriko is on my side, but if she were to take any overt action it would let Shido use her act of helping me to turn the refugees against her. And that could turn sour fast

That leaves. The armed forces and the head honcho, Saya's dad, who is now MIA at the powerplant. A place that, if the guards that are under Shido's sway are to be believed, is overrun with corpses.

Being that Saya's dad is also involved in politics, and he is described as charismatic, and scary as fuck. If he was here, he should have been able to tear Shido a new one in his own stupid little game.

Question is if he is still alive...)

"Question." I lift my head as I begin to speak, causing Yuriko to focus on me.

"Whose side the armed personnel will take in case things get bad? And, said personnel, are they professionals or not? Knowing their allegiance would be key in any further plans." Finishing my question I lean back on my chair.

"Most of the people acting as armed guards now were loyal followers of my husband long before the outbreak. So they would definitely lend their support if Souichirou was here. And no, most of them did not really have any training. They were not in the military or anything like that." Finishing her reply Yuriko averts her eyes from me and starts looking out of the window, probably to hide how vexed she was with the current state of affair.

(So they have practically no experience handling firearms, though I can't discount the possibility that they have other martial capabilities. They are after all, a part of an Ultra Nationalist Party in Japan, some

of them probably have martial arts training. So it seems they just happened to get the guns right after the outbreak because of Saya's dad's influence?)

"And if he is dead?" I say as I keep my eyes on Yuriko.

"Hard to say. Maybe the whole place will get wrapped in chaos as each of the lieutenants struggle for dominance. Normally, if Souichirou were to die, I'm the one that was supposed to take his position as leader. But I'm not him, I'm not confident that I can get the full support of his men. I might have had a hand in increasing this family's wealth, but for his men, I am respected simply because I married into this family.

It was my husband who built this. Who had gathered the people under him. There is a big chance, with Souichirou gone, some of the people that would normally be at our side, will probably decide stay out of it. While it is unlikely that they would turn against me, it's still a possibility." She keeps her eyes on the window as she speaks.

"I see. Did he have any armed people with him, other than the engineers? I don't mean guards like the ones that found Shido, armed personnel that stay with him." I ask after a silent moment.

"Yes he does. And I do believe he is still alive, he's not one to die this easily." She answers with a determined expression on her face.

(She has a lot of faith in him. And well, he was walking around with a bonafide katana. So yeah. Anyway, there are only two things I can do right now. Wait and hope he would return by himself.

Or...

Try to find Souichiro Takagi, Saya's dad, myself before the retarded refugees here try to violently remove my head from my shoulders.)

"Hypothetically speaking, how hard would it be for somebody to escape from here and go to the powerplant on foot?" As I ask, Yuriko

turns her sight to me, raising an eyebrow at my question.

"Impossible, especially if said 'hypothetical' person is handcuffed to a table." She says as she folds her arms, disapproving what I'm implying.

I keep staring at her, until she finally lets out a sigh.

"You know what you're planning to do is crazy, almost suicidal in fact, right? We are already preparing a whole team of armed people to go there." Her eyebrows take a worried frown as she speaks.

"A group that might be in cahoots with Shido you mean." I respond as I tilt my head.

I added the most likely action that Shido would do to sabotage the rescue, causing Yuriko to stare at me. A moment later she released another sigh.

"And what am I supposed to say to your friends then? I already have a negative reputation with them by arresting you. What am I supposed to say..."

"They don't need to know." I cut her off. Yuriko remained silent, so I continued on.

"Because after me, they will likely be the next targets for Shido to try and make disappear. They do know his true nature after all. It's better to try and stop this 'infection' before it gets out of hand." After I finish, Yuriko sighs again and shakes her head...

After some seconds, she gets up.

"Are you absolutely sure about this? I mean, try to see this from my point of view. You are asking me to send a kid to a facility that is supposed to be overrun by flesh eating monsters." She responds up as she stares at my face.

"If I were to stay here, hoping for a miracle that we both know is not coming any time soon, I'm dead either way. Might as well go with the option where I 'might' survive." I answer with as much conviction as I can.

Yuriko stayed silent for some time, her face giving off the impression that she is in deep thought.

"... Wait here." She says as she turns around and moves towards the door. She unlocks it and exits the room, closing the door behind her, before locking it from the outside.

"Oh ok, I was about to take the table and go for a stroll. But I guess I'll wait since she asked..." I say sarcastically as I give the handcuffs a tug and slump back on the chair.

(Sooo, Saya is fond of me huh? Coulda fooled me... heh...)

A couple of minutes passed before I heard the door being unlocked once more. I was actually tense for a few seconds, thinking that Shido had decided to go 'fuck it' and try finish me off now with Yuriko out off the way. Thankfully I didn't see that snake's face coming through the door as Yuriko walked inside, along with my backpack.

The moment she walked into the room two more people followed behind her, locking the door behind them. I just watched the whole event silently.

With the door locked, Yuriko then turned towards the two men.

"Alright, stand by the door you two, this won't take long." She says to the two as she walks to me, uncuffs me and takes the handcuffs away.

(Finally, I thought I was about to get married to this table with how intimate we were being.)

I crack my wrist to limber up any stiffness from being cuffed the whole time.

"Your equipment should all be in here, minus the shotgun obviously." Yuriko passes the backpack to me as she speaks. I nod and take the bag.

(Hello old friend, missed me?)

"So... what's the plan on getting me out of here?" I ask, and one of the guys that came with Yuriko turns to look at me.

"We are to be on the next patrol that will leave in about ten minutes. Before we leave the mansion we'll pick you up en route, and from there we'll take you outside with the patrol jeep. After that, we drive you towards the power plant." The guards speaks up, Yuriko nods after the he finishes talking.

"Okay. Now in the backpack, I've also placed a two-way radio that is normally used by the guards. Except this one has been tuned to only broadcast to a specific frequency so it won't transmit to every single radio in the vicinity, only to this one here can get a signal from it" Yuriko says as she waves a radio in her hand ..

"I also left a handgun with two clips in your backpack. Your shotgun I'm afraid..."

"Too big to hide, and too noisy to stealthily walk around with, I know." I cut in, Yuriko nods before she continued speaking.

"After you reach the powerplant, Look for any survivors. Anyone sent there is quite important to rescue, though your main objective is still finding Souichiro. If he is no longer alive. Bring proof of his death back with you, we'll think of a different way to get you off the firing line after that." Yuriko kept a straight face as she spoke of the morbid subject. I just nodded in response.

"While we do not have a map of the interior of the power plant, we do have some basic information about it. The facility should have two buildings, the main building containing the office and control rooms, and a warehouse. Any other structures there are simply part of the power generation process and only part of the infrastructure, so you should focus your search on these two buildings.

The facility should also have two giant chimneys that you should be able to see from a distance if you somehow lose your bearings on the way there. Now, last but not least, the place is supposed to be overrun, so don't do anything stupid alright?" Finishing, Yuriko stands up and looks at the guards.

They nodded and started moving, probably to the jeep.

"Okay kid, Miss Yuriko will take you to the location we agreed to make a stop so we can pick you up without anyone finding out. You will hide there until we arrive" With that last remark done, they turn around and leave.

Yuriko then signals me to follow her, I get up and throw my bag over my shoulder, once I reach the door, she gives me the handcuffs along with the key.

"Handcuff yourself please. Just in case anybody else sees you, it's easier to explain if you're handcuffed. " She says as she hands them over to me.

"Can't have dangerous me running around the building huh..." I chuckle and put the handcuffs on, pocketing the key in the process, Yuriko just stares back at me...

"Let's go." She said before we both exited the room and started moving towards the stairs...

As we moved down the tall hallways, I could not help but marvel at the opulent house.

(Carpeted floors, marble pillars, all the good stuff. Don't think I'll ever get used to such a house.)

"I feel like a spec ops operative for some reason... " I say as we walk down the hallway. Yuriko was about to speak, only to close her mouth the moment we reached the stairs.

I looked at Yuriko before turning my sight towards where she was looking...

(Ohh boy...)

The stairs had a certain moody pink-haired person sitting on the top stair, both hands under her chin and her elbows on her knees. She was staring off towards the exit...

I turn to see Yuriko, whose face has taken an obvious sad frown.

"Any other way we can exit the building?" I whisper. She turns to me, taken somewhat off guard.

"Y, yes." She turns around and motions me to follow her.

I give Saya a last glance before turning around, picking up speed towards the opposite direction...

If the mood was bad back then, well, it has now hit rock bottom. Yuriko for one looked rather dejected as she walked next to me.

"Don't get killed Sepfier... " She speaks up.

"Don't make me have to be the one to tell them that I sent you off on a suicide mission. Saya already hates me enough as it is... " She continues, sadness very apparent in her voice.

"Nobody hates you, they're just on edge, that's all. And I know that, your daughter loves you. It is just as you said, she simply fails to show it correctly." I say as we keep walking, keeping my eyes straight ahead...

We kept silent until we reached another set of stairs. These ones were empty, so after we went down the stairs we instantly headed out the exit. Once we were outside, Yuriko motioned me to follow her as she went to the right, straight towards a small patch of trees next to the main house.

And after reaching said trees, Yuriko turned around to me.

"Wait here Naier, the jeep with the guards should pass from here, the guards will make a stop in front of you so you can get in. After that keep your head down until they tell you that you are in the clear... " After she finishes talking she turns to leave.

"Saya will understand." I say as Yuriko begins walking away, causing her to stop and turn around.

"And if she doesn't, I will explain it to her myself. After I bring her father back." I say with a slight nod towards Yuriko, before turning around and walking deeper into the cluster of trees.

(Saya needs to cut her mother some slack.)

I think as I sit by a tree, doing my best to hide myself in the foliage.

(I wonder what the rest are really doing. If Saya was not asleep, the rest might be awake too.)

And with that. I take the key out of my pocket and take the handcuffs off. Then, I open my bag, toss the handcuffs in and look inside to better catalog what's inside.

(Let's see, leg guards, arms guards, the walkie talkie, my swiss knife, a flashlight, map, and ohh the pistol Yuriko was talking about.)

I pick up the handgun, take out the magazine and then take one bullet out.

(Looks like a SIG P220, 9x19 mm bullets. Well, it's still a peashooter compared to the Ithaca... And now I miss my shotgun. Ohh well,

better than nothing.)

I put the bullet back inside and then insert the mag back in the gun, then leave the gun on the grassy floor and keep looking inside the bag.

(There's the mags, the flashbang belt is here, no flashbangs though. Hmmm I see another belt here.)

I grab the belt and pull it out, pulling a leather holster along with it. I nod, thanking Yuriko in my heart, and strap the belt on my waist. I then take the handgun off the ground and put it in the holster on my right.

(Shame that it's a right hand holster, I'm left-handed. Well won't be too hard to just draw it and then switch hands.)

I turn back to the bag.

(More importantly, where... is... my... mask!)

I was starting to get frustrated as I took the leg and arm guards out of the bag, to make it easier to see inside the bag. I then start looking back inside.

(It better be in here, or I'm going to sue... hmm?)

I grab a hard object from the bottom of the bag and pull it out. Pulling my mask along with its balaclava.

(Why hello there.)

I then put the balaclava on, followed by the mask shortly after...

(Much better.)

I then take the arm and leg guards I left on the grass and strap them on me as well. After I was done, I focused back on my bag and began looking inside again.

(Can't find my screwdriver, guess they took it. Why though?)

With that over with, I put the radio in my front pocket, and strap the bag back on my back...

I then spend the next couple of minutes staring at the people that passed by the road...

(I really have an urge to play video games right now. What the hell is wrong with me?)

I shake my head as I chuckle.

(Guess some habits die hard. Or well, they don't die at all. I wonder, what would the girls think of me if they knew I was an avid gamer...

Other than Saya calling me an idiot obviously. Saeko, would probably tell me I need to train my body or something?

Nahh, I'm just thinking in stereotypes now. Maybe she would like games where she could kill the shit out of the one sitting next to her? So anything PVP?

Or one with excessive violence, isn't that a stereotype too though?

Kohta, fps, shooters. Has guns, he likes. In the anime it was pretty much proven that he did play video games when he spoke with Saya while on the bus.

Takashi. Uhh, I feel like he would be the guy to play whatever his friends would play...

Rei, hmm, she would seem like a fighting game type of person? I can't really tell.

Saya, I'll say RTS or general strategy games. Just so she can show off how smart she is of course...

Shizuka, uhh... umm. The Sims? Goat simulator? I get the feeling that she would play whatever and yet still manage to do something crazy without even knowing the game's buttons. Like stuffing a jet plane into a house without exploding or something.

And little Alice. I'll just say pokemon, don't think her parents would let her play something violent. Though I guess beating the crap out of wild creatures and then stuffing them in balls so you can use them to beat the crap of other wild creatures is not very nonviolent now that I think about it...)

I then let off a giant yawn.

(Ughh, if I don't count that half-hour in the humvee. I still haven't slept since yesterday.)

Just as I shake my head to clear the cobwebs, I finally see a jeep stopping some meters away from the patch of trees I was hiding in...

(Is this my ride?)

I then see the guard I met earlier exit the jeep's passenger seat as he begins to walk towards my direction. I get up and walk to him.

"We good?" I ask.

He stares at me for a couple of seconds before nodding...

"Yea... Come on, we can't stay too long." With that, I follow him to the car

(That looks like a Mitsubishi Type 73? Isn't that thing supposed to be used by the Japanese military or something? Uhh whatever, guess I'm hiding in the back.)

I quickly walk to the jeep and enter it via the passenger's seat, then move to the back, then lie down. The second guard then enters the car and closes the door, just as the jeep begins to move.

"Do I hide under a cover or something?" I ask.

"Nahh, just stay down. The front gate guards are too lazy to come and check anyway." The driver speaks up.

"If you say so." I say as I look around the jeep to pass the time...

And a couple of turns later, the guards started speaking again.

"Alright, we are nearing the gate, stay down and stay quiet." The guard on the passenger seat speaks up, and some seconds later, the car comes to a full stop.

The driver opened the door slightly and spoke to, presumably, the gate guards.

"Oi, open up, guard patrol! " He shouts before closing the car's door, and shortly after, the car starts moving again.

(Well, that was simple.)

And a couple of minutes later...

"And we are in the clear, you can get up now" The guy on the passenger seat speaks up again.

With that, I get up to a sitting position.

"There should be a combat knife in the back there somewhere for you. Find it, and take it with you." The same guy adds up.

"Got it" I say as I start looking around the back of the jeep...

It was, Quite the mess to be honest. Bags and packages of snacks or food were tossed around seemingly in a hurry. I could also see the butt of what seemed to be an assault rifle under some bags too.

"The place is kind of a mess, where exactly is the knife?" I ask.

"Uhh. Look behind my seat, should be around there somewhere."
The driver answers.

And like that, I start scanning around my left...

(Bags, bags and more bags, what a clutter-fest. Hmm, oh wait a minute, that might be it.)

What seemed to be the hilt of a knife was stuck in the corner next to the seat, I grabbed it and pulled it out, and the combat knife was finally revealed.

"Got it, thanks for the heads up" I respond as I look at the knife.

"Don't mention it, you'll need all the help you can get" The guy on the passenger seat turns to me as he speaks.

"But maaan. Sucks to be you" The driver then exclaimed.

"You are stuck here doing a suicide mission while the other dude from your group is getting all funky with the girls back at the house."
The driver continues.

"Who... ? Is doing what... ?" I ask as I stare at the driver.

(Takashi better not be trying to woo the girls while I'm out here trying to stop my execution.

Or worse. The girls, trying to woo Takashi... Gahh God damn it, this is making me salty as hell.)

"Yeah, he was hanging around with two of them near the entrance of the main building. One of them had orange hair, the other one purple." The driver casually continues.

"Ughh... for fuck's sake Takashi. At least wait until I'm actually dead you fucktard." I say as I start tapping my hand on my leg.

"So that's his name huh. So, which one?" The driver asks.

"Which one, what?" I ask back.

"Which one you like obviously..." The driver says as he turns his head to me, and ends up staring at my mask.

"Eyes on the road..." I say back to the driver.

He just laughs and turns his head back to the road. And a couple of seconds later,

"So come on, out with it ninja boy" The driver speaks up again.

"Talk about a personality switch. You were acting way different from when I saw you with Miss Takagi..." I say with a sigh.

"Hey, we do have to show respect to Miss Takagi" The driver answers back.

"Well come on, you are willing to go and run around in an overrun facility and you can't answer that much? Speak up, come on man up. It's not like we're going to blab to anyone about this." The driver says as he turns to me again.

"Ughh... fine. As long as it makes you stop bothering me, It's the purple-haired one. Ya happy now?" I say as I fold my arms.

(I'm obviously not telling them I like Saya as well. I highly doubt Saya's dad is dead, and I doubt these guys can actually keep their mouths zipped)

"See, it wasn't that hard now was it" The driver just laughs as he turns his head back to the street.

"Are you trying to make me flip out? Because you are doing a pretty good job so far." I say as I lean forward and poke the side of the driver's seat with my new knife.

"Yea yea. Hah, sorry didn't mean to pick on you. No hard feelings?" The driver says as he keeps snickering.

I sigh and pull the knife back...

(I expected the guys that work under Saya's dad to be more. You know, all work no fun type, with a katana sheath lodged up their ass or some crap.)

"Well I wouldn't worry about it that much." The guy on the passenger seat adds right after.

"What?" I turn my sight to the passenger as I ask.

"About the girls, my friend here is just being a dick. The guy was not getting funky with anybody, he was just talking." The passenger turns to look at me as he finishes.

(Talking CAN be a reason to worry. Especially when it comes down to Saeko and Takashi. Still, postponing turning Takashi into a gib sandwich... for now.)

The driver was about to talk again, when...

"Naier." The radio in my pocket comes alive, and the driver instantly shuts up as I pull out the walkie talkie.

"I'm here, we have just left the estate and are heading towards the drop off point" I say as I speak to the radio.

"I see. Good. I take it those two are not causing you any trouble?" Yuriko speaks up.

I turn to stare at the driver as he glances at me...

"... We are doing just fine." I answered, as I could see the driver giving off a huge sigh...

"Alright, good... Once you arrive there, inform me" And with that the radio goes silent.

"Well, and that's that, how much longer until we reach my stop?" I ask as I turn my head and look out of the jeep.

"Five minutes? Three? Not much longer is where it's at." The guy on the passenger seat speaks up.

"Alright, thanks." I answer.

(Saya's dad better still be alive, or we will have to deal with some major frigging problems.)

As we kept heading further away from the estate, I could slowly see more and more corpses start popping up.

(You know. In the anime Takashi and Saeko split up from the rest of the group right before the estate. Something that obviously did not happen because I used that flashbang. I would like to say that this is proof that things can change. But, I haven't really changed anything yet.

There is still the fact that in the manga these two split after the estate. And as the anime ends right after the estate, there is still a chance things might just go on as they did in the manga...

Uhh, matter not right now. What matters is finding Saya's scary-ass dad. And more importantly, making sure Saya's house won't fall.)

Electrifying

"This is as far as we can take you. The engine will attract the ones wandering around here, so you might want to go to a safer location before you radio in with miss Takagi." The driver closes the car's door as he finishes speaking. I nod and turn around.

The sound of the jeep's engine echoes behind me as the car drives off, heading back towards its usual patrol route probably. I take a deep breath and look around me, at the corpses that were now walking towards me, attracted to the sound of the engine that was here a couple of seconds ago.

(Yeah, better move out.)

I jerk my shoulders and do a couple of jumps in place to limber up. Cramps kill after all... quite literally in this case.

(First, get away from here. Second, radio in with Yuriko. Third, don't get bit. Alright me, let's do this.)

I narrow my eyes and focus ahead of me.

(While there are a couple of corpses that are heading towards my direction, the road ahead only has a small group of three 'blocking' my way, and the road along the pavement is wide enough for me to just walk around them. And now that I'm alone again, I can actually be stealthy. A 'Must be' too, as fighting is not a good idea right now, because the only close-range weapon I got is a combat knife. And the gun, but it's better to hold on to it in case things get bad.)

With that, I silently move down the street, strafing around the corpses that were shambling towards the opposite direction.

(Still, it's weird how there are no crashed or abandoned cars around here. Did Souichiro's men clear them out? Hmm, seems unlikely, they would have needed some heavy machinery to do that. And that

stuff is usually too slow to move around. So, back at the task at hand, what can I use as a vantage point? This place has no cars for me to climb, and I'm not going to use a house fence as higher ground...)

I glance around me as I keep walking

(Actually, speaking about that. I expected the location to look more industrial as the power plant is supposed to be near, yet I still see houses around. Maybe I'm not that close? I expected the location around the powerplant to be quite empty.)

I then checked the clothes the corpses wore as I walked past them.

(None of these guys are dressed like industrial workers either.)

After walking past the initial group of corpses, I looked down the street ahead of me.

(And if the facility was overrun by a horde, then why are there corpses shambling about. No that's, a stupid question. Maybe these ones arrived later, or they got stuck to a wall or something. Maybe the horde didn't come from this way to begin with.)

Looking ahead I could also see an intersection in the distance.

(Ok let's head there first, then figure out what to do. The road is relatively clear so I should reach it without meeting much of a resistance.)

With that, I stay in the middle of the road and start walking towards the intersection.

(This is the first time since my romp in the school that I'm actually alone again huh. I just had to pull the short end of the stick. Damn it Shido, I could have used the free time in the estate to get closer to the group, like asking Saeko to train with me. But noooo, motherfucking Shido must pop up out of nowhere and fuck shit up. I

should have tossed his stupid ass to a group of corpses and let him get chewed up back at the bus, damn the consequence. Now I'm stuck here because of him while Takashi is doing God knows what...)

I shake my head and look around me.

(Uhh, I will worry about Takashi and the girls later. Got to keep focused on my surroundings before I end up bumping into something.)

With that, I stop myself from getting distracted and keep the focus on the corpses that were shambling about on the road. Upon reaching the intersection a couple of minutes later, I stop at the middle and look at the three diverging paths.

(Let's see... if I go straight, houses as far as the eye can see. To my right, I can see an increase in housing on a downhill road. To my left, I can actually see the opposite, the houses are exchanged for tree patches and small fields, with the road going uphill. Also, are those two giant chimneys in the distance? Yeah, this is definitely my road. And if I can see the chimneys from here, I mustn't be too far away after all.)

I turn to the left and start walking up the road while taking the radio out of my pocket and pushing the talk button.

(Can't find any safe location, so I might as well make the call now.)

"Miss Takagi, sorry for the delay, I had to find a clear spot to call. I'm on foot and heading up an uphill road that seems to lead to the powerplant. Over." I say in a low tone as I keep walking.

"It's alright, the guards should have left you on a road that leads to the powerplant as long as you turn north on the first intersection. Over" Yuriko answers back.

"Hmm, so I'm heading north. Speaking of, where is my compass? It was not in the bag. Over" I answer back as I keep walking up the road.

"Compass? There was no compass in the bag when they brought it to me. Over." Yuriko answers.

(Somebody has sticky fingers apparently...)

"Never mind then, no point dwelling on it now. So I'm heading north, would that mean that I will end up in the south part of the facility? Over." I ask.

"Yes. If you head straight after taking the north turn you will end up on the south part of the power plant. I know I've said it before, but the facility is overrun, so be..."

"Careful I know..." I cut her off.

"Don't worry, if I didn't feel like I could handle it, I wouldn't have asked you to send me here in the first place. Over." After I finished talking, the radio stayed silent for a couple of seconds.

"Heh, then good luck. If anything comes up, talk to me. I will keep the radio silent so I don't accidentally end up attracting any infected to you. Over."

And the radio goes silent once more. I put it back into the side pocket on my pants and keep a steady pace forward...

As I kept moving up the hill, the houses were becoming sparser and sparser, until finally, the only thing besides the road were trees and empty fields. The street itself was clear of corpses, other than the occasional shambler that was strolling to hell knows where. I could see more corpses standing still on the fields though.

(Let's hope they stay there pretending to be trees.)

I turned my attention back to the road, and looked at the two giant chimneys. I expected to see an increase in corpses as I got closer, yet, I saw no such thing. The road stayed as empty as ever.

(I don't like this. For a road leading to what's supposed to be an infested building. It's almost clear of corpses.)

I quickened my pace, trying to reach the power plant a little faster. And after climbing the uphill slope, I finally saw it.

"Well... fuck me..." I growl under my breath as I look at the power station that was below me. Or more exactly, at the fence surrounding the power station. The reason why the roads were almost free of corpses, was pretty simple to figure out now. The fence around the power plant was holding all the corpses inside the complex. The same complex that I needed to get into and search for someone.

(At least, I got a good view of the facility from up here.)

I scratch the back of my head as I keep looking at the power station, trying to figure out how I would be getting inside without leaving several parts of me as a sacrifice.

(I'm going to need a tank, a flamethrower and a flying bike with twenty rockets... Ughhh...)

I looked around me to make sure I didn't have any corpses creeping up on me, then kneeled down and turned my sight back towards the facility.

(Going straight ahead through the south side of the complex, is a no go. Jumping over the fence would be instant suicide, the other side has a giant ass horde packed all together, no way I'm getting passed that. The sides of the fence look clearer though, so I could hypothetically walk around the whole facility to find an opening. Or, I could create a diversion. If these things are that good at hearing things. I could draw a lot of them to one side of the facility by making a racket next to the fence...)

I started planning as I looked at the fence, following its path with my sight.

(The fence also seems to enclose the facility. Gives the feeling of a private facility to be honest. And as Yuriko said, there's the one main building. It looks like a capital 'L' with the longer part of the structure extending from the west to the east. I suspect that the north fence must be on the back of that building. The two chimneys are also next to that building, towards my right.

The warehouse is closer to me and to my left, so southwest of the main building. The western fence should be behind it, but I can't see it right now. And then there are a bunch of, metal structures? to the east. I have no freaking idea what they are for, but I can see a lot of pipes running among them. There is also a giant silo on the far end, right next to the main building. So I guess, the eastern fence ends around there...

Yuriko told me to look for Souichirou at the main building and the warehouse. Now, the warehouse is currently in the spot where the horde has gathered at. Also worth mentioning is that the horde is not spread out all over the facility, it's actually gathered near the warehouse. So, something made them move to that one spot? Hmm, there's guess one way to find out. Time to move out.)

I get up and start moving down the hill, towards the facility.

(I will circle around the fence and check for an opening.)

It didn't take too long for me to reach the fence after I started walking. And so, here I was, standing a few meters away from a moaning horde, separated only by a tall wire fence. I sigh and look at the sky.

(At least I still got time before it gets dark. It must be what, three pm right now? So I guess I'll check the left side first, as the warehouse is that way.)

With that, I start heading to the left, walking along the fence in silence. I kept looking at the warehouse as I walked, and noticed that it has some sort of concrete building next to it, or behind it, if we take it from where I'm looking.

(The shutters are down, so that's a point for survivors possibly being there. There's a good chance a group could survive by barricading themselves, it has not been compromised.)

I kept walking until the western fence slowly came into view. And once I had a clear view of the western fence, I saw what was probably the horde's 'entrance' point.

(That's, one big hole alright.)

Most of the west fence had been toppled over.

(So the horde came from the west or the northwest.)

There was also a steep increase in the number of corpses on this side, both inside the facility and outside.

(Yaaa... definitely not this way.)

I turned around and quickly started walking in the opposite direction.

(Hope the horde came only from one direction, If the eastern side is like this too... ugh.)

I backtrack all the way until I reach my starting point, and then start heading towards the east end of the fence.

(The structures over this side are also blocking my view. Got to keep me on the edge till the very last minute huh...)

This time around, it was a much longer walk to see whether or not the eastern end of the fence is safe, as I had to walk all the way to the end of the fence because my view was blocked by the metallic

contraptions. When I finally reached said end, I took a left turn and looked at the eastern fence.

(... clear)

I breathe a sigh of relief.

(Guess I'm going this way then.)

I think as I start walking down the eastern fence.

(Compared to the southern fence, this side is way longer. But as it also covers the silo at the far end. Any entry point I should be able to find should be before that silo.)

This side of the fence was, thankfully, free of corpses. At least when compared to the west and southern side.

(Guess nobody tried to run this way huh...)

I kept walking next to the fence until finally, I saw a good location to jump inside.

(An open space, looks like it leads to a road inside the facility. Better than jumping in and being surrounded by metal walls and machinery I guess. I don't know if any of them are still active or dangerous in any way, plus tight spaces and possible dead ends... Yeah. That's a very cliché way to die.)

I make up my mind and take a few steps back, moving away from the fence. Then with a short sprint, run-up to it. And using the momentum I climb up. After my upper body was over the top of the fence, I pushed my legs to the side and vault over it. Landing with a soft thump, my face looking at the fence

(Why am I getting a feeling of déjà vu right now?)

I turn around and look at the road that started a few meters away from me.

(The road would probably lead me to the main building if I walk along it. And since that's my destination...)

Destination decided, I carefully searched my backpack to grab the combat knife. Better safe than sorry after all, as shooting a gun here could end very bad for me.

(Not raring to jump into a fight with a corpse, but it's infinitely better than going in barehanded. Hisashi can vouch on that.)

Knife in hand, I silently move to the center of the deserted road.

(Let's see... the main building is straight ahead as I jumped in near the end of the east fence. The warehouse with the massive horde of corpses is probably far off to my left. I say 'probably' as at the moment my vision of it is blocked by all the metallic structures. So if I go straight, I will end up at the main building...)

With that, I start moving down the road. Thankfully as the road itself was rather wide and, other than the structures on my left, the right side looked like a giant concrete field that led straight to the main building. Probably a parking lot for big rigs or something. Meaning I had more than enough space to move around the few roaming corpses there are.

(It is weird though, for all the corpses roaming about, I don't see any blood on the floor, or any half-eaten carcasses. And so far, all the corpses look like normal civilians or factory workers. None of them look like the people from Souichiro's group, as all of them wore that white school uniform knock-off, or was it a military uniform knock-off? No idea what the group's engineers would wear though.)

As I kept moving down the road, I could also see several black objects near the main building.

(Hmm, Cars. In the anime, Souichiro did return to the estate in a black jeep after all.)

And as the road was slowly getting a bit 'too' populated for my liking, I turned to the right and headed towards the giant concrete field.

(This place makes me want to sprint for some reason...)

I shake my head and keep moving forward steadily. And as I got near the main building, I saw the first signs of a struggle. A dead-dead body, or what remained of it at least, with several corpses surrounding it. The whole thing was a good distance away from the cars and entrance, so it would not really obstruct me in any way.

(Still, I wonder.)

I stop a couple of meters away from the corpses that surrounded the body. The feast they just had still visible on their bloody rotting faces...

(The body does look like one of Souichiro's men. These guys, they should have been armed, right?)

I squint my eyes, trying to get a better look while lifting my mask.

(Can't see any weapons on his body, could be under it. Still, trying to get there to look would be impossible without me bumping into a corpse. It's a shame, but I'm not risking it.)

I pull my mask down and keep moving towards the main entrance. Only to come to a full stop shortly after...

(Well, I should have expected this. But, uhh... crap.)

The entrance was blocked off with corpses, creating a wall of bodies before the front door. Not 'too' many of them to be clearly visible from a distance, but enough to actually pose a problem...

(How the hell do I get inside? A window? If they are locked, I will end up making too much noise in order to smash them. Not something I want to do with all of these creeps standing next to the entrance. I could look around the building and enter it from a window that is

away from the group. Hmm, the front door still looks closed from what I can see, so there's a chance that the interior of the building is still clear. But before that...)

I decided to check the vehicles first. The area around them was also relatively clear, with only a couple of corpses flocking around a big semi-truck that was parked among the vehicles. I moved towards a jeep that had no corpses surrounding it, in order to get a better look.

(The windows are tinted black, I can't see frigging crap.)

I move to the driver's door and grab the handle.

(Heh. Yeah, as if it would be that easy...)

I think as I pull the handle on the door. Only to find that the car was indeed unlocked.

(Well... holy shit.)

I continue to open the door while moving to the side, using the door as cover. With nothing suddenly leaping out of the car, I then took a peek inside.

(Looks empty.)

I proceed to do the same with the back seat door.

(Empty as well.)

I silently closed the back seat door and then went back to the front. I then enter the jeep's driver seat while leaving the door open.

(Let's see, what might we have in here.)

I open the passenger's glove box, then look around the seats and floor.

(Nothing, nothing... and... nothing, huh. Well, this was underwhelming.)

I was about to exit the car, when my sight got caught by something that was hanging behind the steering wheel...

(You... you've gotta be kidding me.)

The keys were still in the ignition switch.

(Either they are really forgetful or they left in a big fucking hurry. In either case, if this ain't a lucky break then I don't know what is.)

I smirk as I pull out the keys...

(Just in case.)

I exit the jeep, silently closing the door behind me as I look at the corpses that were still blocking the entrance to the main building. I stand there, jiggling the car keys for a few seconds, before turning to look back at the car.

(I must be crazy...)

I open the door once more, enter the car, then close the door. This time with a loud thud. I put the keys in the ignition and turn them...

The engine comes alive with a roar. I then rev the engine, and press on the horn, hard.

(This should do it.)

I dart my head around to see the corpses in the surrounding area turning towards the car. Including the ones that were at the door.

(Well that did the trick. But now I really don't want to be here.)

I turn my sight to the gearbox as I move to turn the car to reverse.

(Ohh, it's an automatic?)

I remarked as I moved the gear stick to reverse, turning the car around while in reverse, and then change the lever to 'D' as I press on the pedal again.

(Now, where do I stop?)

My sight stops at the toppled fence at the far west.

I keep staring at the fence before steering the car towards it.

(And I just had, a very stupid idea...)

I press on the pedal harder as the car increases its speed. Before long, it went over the toppled western fence, and kept moving outside to the grassy fields. Whatever corpse was in front of me. Well.. .too bad for them. Once outside, I steer to the left and speed down the field, the toppled fence next to me to my left.

If I said I tried to avoid the corpses that were on my way, then I would be lying. The ones that were sent flying left and right being the proof of it. And once I reached the end of the fence, I pressed on the brakes and turned to the left. I then drove forward again until I reached the same location where I was when I first got here. The center of the southern fence. I turn the car to face the fence before stopping completely.

(Now, I need something long and hard... err. That sounded wrong...)

I shake my head and exit the car.

(A tree branch would do. But let's check the trunk first)

I move to the back of the jeep and open the trunk.

(Empty, go figure. Tree branch it is then.)

I close the trunk and look around.

(Fields, fields and more fields. Where's a tree when you need it? Hmm I think, I saw some trees on the top of the hill where I came from.)

With that, I start running up the hill. Upon reaching the top, I look at the trees that were around me.

(Well, there are trees here. But, ughh... the branches are too high up, I need to climb up the trees to even reach a branch that might do. And considering that all I have is a combat knife, cutting a live branch while hanging on a tree will take forever. So, time for plan B)

I turn around, run back to the car and enter it...

(And by plan B. I mean that it is time to do something very fucking stupid... again.)

I start backing the jeep away from the fence to enact my plan. Upon gaining some distance, I punch the horn, and keep my hand on it for a good long while. The corpses behind the fence, stopped shuffling around, And all turned to 'look' at me...

"Yep, definitely a good idea. This ain't creepy at all..."

And then, the fence starts rattling. The corpses pushing up against each other as they try to move towards the car, causing the fence to start swaying as they grind against it.

(I wonder if the tree wannabe corpses back in the fields can hear this. Ohh who am I kidding, of course they can.)

I keep pressing on the horn as the fence keeps shaking more violently by the second. Until, with a loud crash, the fence goes down, along with a crap-load of corpses behind it. I move the lever in reverse and press on the pedal.

(To think they can overpower a fence this fast...)

The horde, now free from the confines of the fence, starts spreading outside like a flood. With most of them walking towards the jeep.

(And yeah, I'm outta here.)

I change the lever to 'D' and stomp on the pedal. The wheels screech before the jeep starts picking up speed. I let go of the horn and turn to the left, driving in a straight line until I was away from the incoming horde.

I then steer the jeep closer to the fence and keep driving in a straight line. Once I reached the end of the fence, I turned to the right and started going straight again. As I passed the warehouse, I shut down the engine to silence the car and let it roll forward with the momentum it still had. I glanced around at the corpses that were bumping into everything as they tried to head off towards the south fence as the car kept rolling.

(All that noise is making them go nuts.)

I pass the warehouse and stop a little bit further down, next to the downed fence.

(Hope the sound of the engine did not make too many of them change direction. I actually wanted to leave the car behind with the horn acting as a decoy. But climbing like a monkey to cut a tree branch yeah, no.)

With the coast clear, I look outside before exiting the car. Then turn around and walk towards the warehouse. The corpses that were around here were all 'focused' on going towards the southern fence, so the once 'death trap' was now a breeze to walk through.

Several meters later, I turn left and go over the fallen western fence, which was now much clearer from corpses.

Soon, I reached the back wall of the warehouse to my right, and a concrete wall to my left.

(Wonder what that left building is for, parking lot? Thing has no ceiling.)

I then keep going straight in an alleyway, between the warehouse and the wall, towards the street that was ahead of me. Only to come to a full stop before reaching the end, as I saw what somebody would call a parade, marching down the street.

(It seems I attracted more than just the horde that was at the warehouse. Hope their attention span lasts long enough that they don't end up stopping next to the warehouse.)

With that, I silently move to the nearby wall to my left, and kneel down.

(Now, we wait.)

With nothing else to do, I look at the knife in my hand.

(Got to find a sheath for you soon. Driving with you in my hand was a pain in the ass.)

I look back at the 'parade' that was moving down the street, towards the southern fence.

(Uhh... I wish the group was here with me. Then again, it's safer in the estate. Even with Shido in there. Wonder what they're doing right now. I could ask Yuriko, nahh. No, she already has her plate full dealing with Shido, I shouldn't bother her with trivial stuff like this. But, I do worry about Saeko's mental state.

Normally, in the original timeline, Saeko and Takashi would have split up from the group at noon today. The event would then lead to them 'sleeping' at the shrine tonight. Cue cinematic fighting scene where Takashi ends up 'persuading' Saeko to make her fight, leading to the 'confession'.

Yet, we got to the estate way earlier, and the way it's going. The split might not happen at all, as my actions already changed how the anime would go, by making the whole group go to the mansion together...

And if the house won't fall, then the dynamites won't be used, so there won't be any loud noise to cause corpses to block off the road. Meaning that the second time when the split normally happens, aka in the manga, won't happen either, and Saeko won't have her 'moment'. And if she keeps that all stuff bottled up inside her. Well, she did say it herself in the anime, she might get out of control, and possibly turn on us.

And I can't just go to her and be all 'Hur durr, tell me how you like beating the shit out of people and believe you are not worthy of positive human feelings so I can tell you that I care'. Even if I do care. She needs to be the one to start that conversation. Problem is, with who she will start it with. Though realistically speaking, that last part is just 'my' problem.

Then, we have Kohta's mental breakdown. In the manga it had a lot to do with that cop that kept speaking in the third person from the mall. What was her name again? Asuzu? Azuzu? Azamu? Uhh... asu... asa... mi? Right... I think it was Asami. He ends up falling for her, and she did like him as well. Which makes it even worse, as he had to shoot her in the head not long after. If I could avoid her death, no. After I make sure that she won't get killed, Kohta will be much better mentally.

Takashi mentally is, fine? Plot shield and stuff. Yeah, jokes aside. He also finally has Rei, so that gives him a reason to keep his shit together.

Saya already had a mental breakdown once. But so far, she seems to be the type that bounces back stronger.

Rei is probably going to be fine as long Takashi is around...

And then, there is me. And that is a good question. What about me? I feel fine. But, you can't ask a lunatic if he is crazy and expect the correct answer. I don't feel the need to mutilate corpses for the fun of it. So I'm not THAT crazy at least. But I do want to kick Shido into a group of corpses and watch as he screams while he watches his own guts leaving his stomach.)

I shake my head and look at the road again. Most of the horde was gone, meaning I could go towards the front gate of the warehouse now.

(Whatever, more stuff to worry about for later, time to go.)

I get up and walk towards the street, then take a right turn and walk down the side of the road, to end up next to the front door of the warehouse.

(No blood or bodies near the door. That's good.)

I then try to open the warehouse's door.

(Hmm, it is not locked. But something is preventing it from being opened. A barricade perhaps?)

I stand in front of the door, and stare at it.

(Well, I'm out of ideas now. The warehouse's walls are made out of cement. So driving into it with the jeep ain't gonna cut it. C'mon think, think.)

I hit my head on the door and turned around.

(At least it's still clear of corpses.)

I walked towards the shutters and gave them a light knock.

(Metal, I wonder if there is any button to open them from the outside.)

I start looking around the door to see if there's a button somewhere, but find nothing.

(Ughh, for fuck's sake.)

I lean back against the shutters.

(I did all this crap and now I'm stuck on the last straight. What a load of bull, I didn't see any type of ladder or catwalk around the warehouse either, and the windows are too high. So, how the fuck am I getting inside?

I could drive the car into the shutters. Nahh, retarded idea, that might wreck the car if I'm lucky, or just kill me outright if I'm not. Plus I will just attract the horde back here. Hmm...)

I take the radio out of my side pocket and press the talk button.

"Uhh, Miss Takagi, I might need some help over here. Over." I let go of the button and wait for an answer. But I got nothing.

"Miss Takagi?" Again, nothing.

(She is probably busy.)

Just as I was about to put the radio back in my pocket...

"IDIOT!?" The radio goes live and a different female voice comes alive..

(You... gotta be joking.)

I quickly cover the radio and look around for any corpses that might have heard the shout.

"For the love of God, don't shout, you're going to get me killed." I say as calmly as I can to the radio as I look around.

(No corpses. Ughh there goes two years of my life.)

"Umm sorry about that." A different female voice answers, probably Yuriko.

"Uhh, yeah. Cat's out the bag?" I ask as I keep a looking round me.

"Heh... I guess it is..." I hear the same voice respond.

"... Mama this ain't funny! what is going on here!" A different voice shouts from over the radio.

(God, I can hear her shouting from over the radio...)

Deciding it was too risky to sit here while Saya was going off like a siren on the walky-talky I walked back to the car. Once there, I got inside and closed the door, making sure all the windows were also closed in hopes to mask some of the noise. And well, having a giant metal bucket between me and the hungry dead does count for something.

"Umm... Naier?" The radio goes live again a couple of minutes later.

"Still here. So, what the hell? " I answer back.

"Uhh. I left the radio on the table and forgot to switch it off while Saya was in the room. Then... " The voice in the radio speaks up...

"Yea. I get the rest. Did you tell her anything? About her father? About Shido? About uhh, me? Over." I replied.

"No, she bolted out of the room. She said she's bringing the others." Yuriko answers.

"So much for being stealthy. Hope she won't go off shouting it for all to hear in the estate." I answer back.

"So, how... is the situation there? You did try to call me." Yuriko speaks up.

"Ohh right, so. There was a horde in the southeastern part of the facility, surrounding the warehouse. The main building also had a small group of walking corpses blocking the front door, but the door itself was closed, so they might just be on the outside. Didn't manage to get a better look at it yet though. Anyway, I managed to get both the horde and the group away from the structures. But uh... well. I hit a little..." I ended up stalling as I glanced outside.

"Did something happen? Are you alright?" Yuriko butts in.

"What, no, no I'm fine. It's just that, I can't get into the warehouse now..." I finish my sentence and hear Yuriko sigh. She sounded, relieved?

"The door is blocked from the inside. Seems like somebody locked themselves in there after attracting the horde. But thanks to that I can't get inside. The shutters are down, the windows are too high, and the door is blocked. Moreso, the walls are made of concrete. If they were made out of a more fragile material I could just drive the car... uh... actually, never mind the last part." I stop mid-sentence, realizing just how stupid that was.

"Naier, for crying out loud, I told you to..."

"Be careful... I know. But I'm running out of ideas here, that's why I called you before ramming any car into any wall..." I cut her off mid-sentence.

"God, Just. Just let me do the talking after your group gets here... alright?" Yuriko speaks up.

"Alright..." I answer as I scan the location around the car again by looking outside the windows.

(Still clear.)

And with that, a couple of minutes pass. Until..

"Naier, they're here. They want to speak to you. " The radio goes live again as I hear Yuriko's voice.

"Hhm." I answer back. And almost instantly I lean away from the walky-talky.

"Alright, idiot! Explanation, now! What is going on here!? Where are you!?" I heard an angry voice shout. Aka, Saya.

"Uhh. Your mother can explain?" I say as I look out of the window. The radio then goes silent again...

(And the whole thing went to shit, ughhh)

"Naier?" A completely new voice comes alive on the radio after a couple of minutes.

(Saeko? Well it is either her, or Rei...)

"I'm listening." I answer.

"Is it true? About Shido trying to frame you? And about you heading off to an overrun power-plant by yourself?" The voice speaks up again.

"Yes and no. It was not, overrun per se, just a small group."

(Yep that's a lie, but they sound pissed enough as it is..)

I answer, and hear a sigh over the radio.

"Why didn't you tell us anything? We are supposed to be a team. Don't you care how others might feel if something happened to you?" The voice, that I'm now pretty sure is Saeko, answers back at me.

(Not being fair is she?)

"And what you would do if you knew? The rest of our group would still have to stay back in the estate. If Shido, or the men with Shido,

saw the whole group missing. Everybody would start poking their noses in places they shouldn't." I answer back.

The radio stays silent...

(This will be cheesy as fuck. But uhh, I can't figure a better way to say it and I'm short on time. So yeah, it's cringe time.)

"You guys, are all I got left. Everybody I knew is either dead, or on the other side of the globe. I didn't do this because I didn't care. Telling you all about it while you would still have to stay behind, would not have had any positive effects in the end." I say as I stare at the knife in my hand. And a couple of seconds later...

"We will talk about this, after you come back here. So you better come back, alive..." Saeko answers back.

"Agreed..."

Electrifying Pt2

"So, uhh. Do you by any chance know how to break into a warehouse? Over." I ask after a short silence.

"Uh. Know how to do, what?" Was the answer Saeko gave me.

"Well, you see. There's this warehouse, and it's locked, and I need to get inside. But the door is blocked off, the windows are too high, and the shutters are down. I also can't make too much noise as I got 'unwanted guests' roaming about. Over." I explained my problem to Saeko. And a couple of minutes later, I got an answer.

"Hmm... can't say I can think of anything. Sorry..." A negative one that is.

"Maybe Takagi can think of something? Over." I turn my head towards the window next to me as I speak.

"Takagi? Umm, There are two Takagi's in the room right now Naier. Could you be more specific?" I hear her ask.

(Ohh right. Of course, uh, why do I suddenly feel like Saya is glaring at the radio right now?)

"The one that is probably glaring towards your direction? Over." I could hear Saeko trying to hold back a giggle as I finished my sentence, the radio then went silent. Only for a few seconds later...

"Huh? What did you tell her idiot, why is she giggling? Uhh, Over." Saeko's voice gets replaced by an annoyed one.

(Bullsfucking eye.)

"Hmm? I just asked her to give the radio to the person who looked the most grumpy in the room. Over." I answer casually.

"... What?! You are a goddamn Idiot! You know that!?" Saya comes back with an oh-so original statement.

"Well, I have you to keep reminding me of that, don't I?" All I got as an answer, was a 'HUM'. I could actually feel the tsundere-ism from all over the radio to be honest.

"So, what do you want?" Saya asks, sending the conversation back towards its main point.

(Uhh, doesn't this thing have a loudspeaker or something?)

I sigh under my breath as I explain to Saya about the warehouse... again.

"Did you try forcing the door open? You, you do have a weapon with you right?" Saya asks.

"No can do, the noise will probably cause the corpses around here to surround the area again. I'm not going to risk getting stuck in there with corpses blocking the only exit. And uhhh, all I got is a handgun, not enough to blast open a door. Over." The response I got, was an annoyed sigh.

"Ugh. Why do you even need to get in there? Actually, why did you even agree to go to that place in the first place? Over." Saya asks again.

"Huh, what'd ya mean? Didn't your mother explain that? Over."

"She said that you're going to make the power plant safe for the engineers to go and take over, so that the people would get a more positive view of you by helping the 'community'. Over." I could feel some obvious sarcasm seeping out from Saya's tone on the word 'community'.

(Yuriko lied to her? Saya doesn't know why I'm really here for? Ughh, goddamnit Yuriko, you have to warn me if you're going to pull stunts

like these. I could have easily said something wrong and without even realizing it, blow the whole thing apart...)

"Uhhh... yeah. I just figured that the warehouse might have something I could use... you know, stuff... " I quickly made up an excuse, a pretty lame one too, as I heard Saya groan over the radio as a response.

"You. You really are an idiot. You should just focus on what you need to do and come back, needless side trips like these can get you killed. Over." Saya was actually speaking rather calmly now. I on the other hand...

"Y, yea, sorry. I, I didn't think you'd be, that worried about me..." Was trying to hold myself back from snickering.

"W.. wha.. I, I'm not worried about you! Who said that I was worried about you!" I hear a flustered shout from over the radio.

(Heh, why is poking the pinkette so much fun?)

"You did." I answer bluntly.

"I did not!... MAMA! STOP, GIGGLING! UGHH... I'm surrounded by IDIOTS!" The radio then abruptly gets cuts off.

(Saya needs to understand that as long she reacts like this, she will be too fun not to mess with. Anyway, I needed that little break from all the corpses, running and bullcrap I had to deal with ever since saving Alice. I guess I owe one to Saya now for lightening up the mood. She does not need to know that though. And I hope Kohta is not TOO pissed at me right now.)

"You sure seem to know which buttons to push to make my daughter fly off the handle, don't you? Over." The radio comes alive once again.

"Umm. Well, isn't it just that Saya just flips out at the drop of a hat?" I answer back at Yuriko, who was now back on the line.

"So, I am to make the powerplant safe? Over." My tone, probably sounded slightly sarcastic as I spoke.

"Yes, so focus on going back to the main building." Yuriko just kept on with the story, so I guess Saya did not bolt out of the room. Or if she did, the others were still there. Not that it's a bad plan, I need to check the main building anyway. And who knows, maybe Souichirou is there and I don't have to deal with the warehouse at all.

"Roger that, main building it is. Over and out." I shove the radio back inside my side pocket and look around one last time, before turning the engine back on.

(Alright, time to focus back on the task at hand. For starters, I'll drive towards the main building, then shut down the engine mid-way as I did before, then see how to act from there.)

And with that, I step on the pedal, and start driving towards the main building.

(Hmm, did I ever mention to the group that I can drive? I don't think I did. Ohh well. Whatever.)

After the fallen part in the fence where I drove the car over came into view, I shut down the engine once again. And after reaching the opening, I turn to the right, climbing over the toppled west fence. Shortly after, the front entrance of the main building, along with the other vehicles came into view. With no corpses around this time.

(Well looks like leaving with the jeep was the best decision after all. I don't see that group of corpses that blocked off the door anywhere. Could it be that the group of corpses I saw 'parading' down the street earlier was the same group flocking the entrance? Well no matter, all the better for me. This place seems to be empty, so I can move more freely now.)

I let the car roll to a stop near the rest of the vehicles, then take the keys out of the ignition and put them into my pocket before I exit the vehicle and silently close the door behind me.

(Alright, let's get this over with.)

I nod to myself and slowly start walking towards the main door of the building...

Upon reaching the door I stopped in front of it and took a closer look at it.

(The door is made out of the hell did it survive a mini horde banging on it? No, wait, there are a couple of cracks on it. Huh, glad I lured them away before they could get in.)

I then give the door a tug.

(Locked, figures.)

I then look through the glass, at the building's main hallway. The sight, was not very uplifting.

Corpses were roaming the inside of the building, some of them looked like Souichiro's men too. The silver lining was that the stairs on the far end ahead of me, that led to the second floor, were barricaded. So there could be survivors up there, and hopefully Souichirou too.

(Well shit. That's not a good way to start off is it?)

But there was also something else that caught my eye. A metal piece of equipment dangling on the side of one of Souichiro's men.

(Is that a Howa Type 89? Well now I REALLY need to get in there...)

I looked around me to see if there was another way inside. Spotting a window, I started moving towards it. And once there I give it a push, then try to pull it, and finally try to push it to the side.

(Nope, no good.)

I back off the window and look for another way again. To my left, I could see part of the structure that extended towards the south. Yet, none of the visible windows looked open from where I was standing.

(I'll go on a limb and say that all the windows are shut tight. God, I should have invested in lockpicking. I could look around the building, but I don't know how good of an idea that is. Especially if the back of the building has corpses that got stuck there after being attracted by the car horn...)

I then look up at the second floor. The windows up there were either shaded, or the sun reflected in such an angle that did not let me see the insides, and again...

(All of em are closed. So, time for plan B)

I 'sheath' the knife by passing the blade under the belt that had the gun holster on, then pull out the gun itself.

(And as with all my plan B's. Tis a stupid as fuck plan.)

I grumbled as I pointed the gun at the window. But, right as I was about to pull the trigger, a plan came to me.

(Hmm, if I'm going in loud and stupid, I could make use of it.)

I lower the gun and run back to the door.

(Let's see. The main hallway is rather spacious, it looks as large as the school's entrance without all the lockers. It also has... five corpses roaming about, along with a couple of bodies on the floor near to the main door. No idea if they're really 'dead' though.

Two of 'em are to the left, next to an entrance to a hallway that leads to the other parts of the structure. One is to the far right, next to a door that probably leads to a room. The one with the gun is by the stairs. And uh, there is one in front of the main door 'staring' at me.

Other than the two corpses that are huddled together to the left, the others are by themselves. So, how do I go about this?

Going from the main door is stupid. Corpse standing next to the door aside, too many bodies on the floor. I could enter by smashing a window either to the left or the right. The left has an extra corpse so, to the right it is.)

With that, I nod to myself and move to the second window to the right, point my gun towards the window, and pull the trigger three times.

The glass window, being a single-pane commercial glass, didn't hold much against the gun after getting shot at point-blank. The first shot made a clean hole with a couple of cracks surrounding it. The second shot landed on the cracks created by the first shot, causing the cracks to spread out even further. And the third shot finally caused the glass to partially shatter.

Using the grip of the gun, I then started bashing the rest of the glass, causing it to give way until the hole was big enough for me to pass through. Before going inside though, I headed back to the main door and aimed the gun again. This time at the corpse with the Type 89. I fired a single shot that pierced right through the glass of the front door. And landed straight into the corpse's face.

The corpse stumbled backward a couple of steps before falling back against the barricade on the stairs. I then walked back to the window, took off my bag and used it as a cushion in order to climb over the shattered window.

(Just to make sure I don't end up cutting myself with the glass fragments. Survive zombie outbreak, die from cut infection.)

As the fourth shot was from the main door, the corpses were now heading towards that spot, ignoring the shattered window.

I climb over and land on the other side, the glass cracking under my boots as I hit the ground.

I turned my sight to the left looking at the three corpses that upon hearing the cracking glass, turned to me. Then look ahead of me at the fourth corpse that had long left the door by the corner and was also walking towards me.

(Ughh, of course they had to hear this.)

I grab the bag and throw it ahead and towards the right, next to the corpse that was straight ahead of me, then run past it from the left, and head straight to the corpse with the assault rifle that had fallen against the barricade. The moment I get next to it, I point the gun to its face.

(Better safe than sorry...)

The corpse's head jerks to the side as another round goes through its head. I then kneel down and shove my gun in its holster before taking the assault rifle off the dead corpse. The moment I managed to get the gun in my hands, I took off the magazine and looked inside.

(Still has bullets.)

I quickly shove the magazine back inside and pull the charging handle back causing a single bullet to fly out of the ejection port.

(It had a bullet in the chamber?)

I let go of the charging handle, and the handle traveled all the way to its initial position, signaling that the gun had a new bullet in the chamber. I then turned around, assault rifle in my hands, staring at the four remaining corpses...

(This is probably one of the most stupid ideas I had, so far...)

I lift the gun and aim it at the corpse that I just ran past, as it was getting a bit 'too' close to my comfort zone. I then switched the rifle to semi-auto and aimed at the corpse's head.

The moment I pulled the trigger, I could feel the difference in power compared to the peashooter I was using some time ago, as I could feel the gun's recoil pushing against my shoulder. Thankfully, all the 'fun' training I had before the outbreak let me hold the muzzle relatively steady. And with a loud 'Crack', the bullet pierced the corpse's head and went on flying behind it, embedding itself into the wall behind the corpse. I then turn my sight to the entrance and at the three last corpses that were shambling towards me. I look down the sights once more and take a deep breath. Three more shots, three more corpses down to the floor, never to get up again.

I take my eyes off the sights and look at the corpses, resting the gun's stock on the side of my hip.

(I just rang the dinner bell for every corpse in the vicinity, didn't I? Weird as it was though, I didn't see any other corpses roaming towards me from the hallways. Locked in some room perhaps?)

I move to where my bag was and pick it up. I then kneel down and pick it up. Yet, before I could turn around...

"Don't move!" I hear a voice shout, causing me to freeze in place and look around.

(Behind me, on the stairs.)

I turned my head to see a guy dressed in the outfit Souichiro's men wore. Standing over the barricade, a Type 89 in his hands, aimed straight at me.

"I uhh, come in peace?... " I say as I keep my finger off the trigger while lifting the hand that held the bag.

"Sure you do, by attracting every single monster here! Drop the gun, hands in the air! Now!" The guard shouts, if my gunshots didn't attract corpses, his shouting sure did.

(Well, just perfect. At least that's a positive on the survivors?)

I slowly crouch down and let go of the assault rifle, then take the handgun and leave it next to the other gun, then let go of the bag and stand up again, raising my arms.

"Uhh, I know it sounds weird but, I'm actually the rescue team..." I say as I keep my voice as calm as I can. The dude's eyebrows almost fused together from the expression he took. But before he could speak, I continued on.

"I was sent by Yuriiko Takagi to find Souichiro Takagi along with any survivors in the Power Plant. The estate is in a bit of a 'pinch' you might say, she can't come herself or send more men." The guard just stares at me as I keep talking, his gun still pointed at me. After a couple of seconds I sigh through my nose, as we just kept staring at each other.

(For fuck's sake dude. I probably just summoned every single corpse in the facility, you know this, and you're wasting my time with this crap.)

"I have a radio in my pocket that you can use to speak with Miss Takagi." I speak up as I lift my left knee and point my finger towards the side pocket on my pants. Yet again, the guard just narrowed his eyes and said nothing, but more importantly, did nothing...

"Ohh for crying out loud, you said it yourself, I probably just ringed a dinner bell for every single thing in the area. Just let me take the radio and give it to you, then you make your decision." I groan as I lower my leg and shake my head slightly.

"No sudden movements. Or you get one in the head" Was all the guard said.

(Ohhh, if I find you in a dark corner inside the estate...)

I slowly lowered my arm and put it in my pocket, I could see the guard tensing up the moment my hand disappeared, to the point that I half expected he would just shoot me to make sure. Thankfully, that didn't happen, as I pulled out the radio by the antenna with my thumb and index finger, then showed it to him.

"See. Tis a radio" I say as I wave it at him, slightly failing to hide my annoyance as I spoke to him.

The guard finally seemed to relax a little when he saw the radio, as he lowered his gun a bit. It was 'still' trained on me though. He motions me with his gun to come to the barricade, I nod and slowly walk to the stairs.

"Leave the radio on the barricade and back away." He commanded the moment I got close.

(Oh, you've gotta be kidding me. This guy watched way too many action flicks...)

I do as the guard says and leave the radio on one of the messily put together tables, then take a few steps back. The guard clumsily holds the gun with one hand by the handle as he moves down the steps and reaches for the radio with his free hand.

(If that guy shoots me by accident with the way he is holding that gun, I'm going to give him to Saeko as a punching bag, after I castrate him...)

The guard finally takes the radio, and pushes the speak button.

"Is this Miss Takagi?" He speaks up...

(No, it's a radio. Yea, that guy was getting on my nerves.)

The guard moves the radio to his ear, apparently listening to the response. And a few seconds later, he turns to look at me,

"How do I know this is Miss Takagi and not some random woman?"
He 'asks'...

(AAAAHHHH FOR FUCK SAKE! THIS GUY AND HIS PARANOIA!)

"Just, just take the radio to Mr. Takagi, he'll know..." I could feel my left eye starting to twitch. Yep, this guy was ticking me off. The guard in response, did nothing, and was just staring at me.

"Ohh no, I'm not leaving this spot for you to do as you please buddy."
The guard 'finally' responds.

(I'm seriously going to bite him...)

"Then call somebody else to take the radio to him. It's not that hard, is it?" I tried to stay as calm as I could while I spoke. If I flipped out here. Well, I would probably get shot by mister paranoia over there.

The guard keeps staring at me as he leaves my radio on the handrail that was next to him, then takes another radio that was in his chest pocket. And shortly after speaking into it, another guard appeared. And then started to stare at me as well.

(Ohh god, they're multiplying. Somebody call an exorcist.)

After an uncomfortably long period spent re-enacting The Shining, the second guard finally took the radio and ran up the stairs. Now, it was just me and the guard again. Oh, and corpses had gathered outside, flocking at the front door once more. Did I forget to mention that? Yep, corpses had gathered outside... again.

(God I hope they don't get inside now. With that idiot over there, I truly believe he will tell me to not move, even if they break in.)

"Just great, now even more of them have gathered outside. Some 'rescue' you turned out to be" The guard started speaking with an obviously sarcastic tone in his voice.

(Why didn't you die at the beginning of the outbreak again?)

The guard opens his mouth to speak again...

"Let him through" When a commanding voice echoed from the top of the stairs. The guard darted his head to the top of the stairs as he straightened his posture.

"Y..YES!" He quickly moves down the stairs and starts undoing the barricade, while I move to take my guns and bag, turning the safety on after picking them up.

(Fucking finally. Talk about a switch in personality.)

I then walked up to the corpse that I took the gun from, with the barricade moved, it was now laying flat on the ground. I kneel down and take off the sling it was wearing, then give the corpse a quick pat-down for any extra magazines before getting up and walking up the stairs.

I could see the guard giving me a really funny look now, as I walked up the stairs.

(What, never played a looter-rpg before bub?)

I just ignore the guard and walk past him. Fixing the sling on me and attaching the rifle on it.

(Thank god this is a three-way sling as well.)

Upon turning to go up the second flight of stairs I see the big boss himself, Souichiro, in all his glory. Waiting at the top of the steps with two other guards flanking him. He was staring or well, glaring at me. Good thing I know that that is his 'casual' face.

(Wait, he has a sword with him? Hmm. In the anime he 'did' have a sword. But in difference with the manga, he never gave it to Saeko. But, Saeko did not get the shrine sword as she did in the anime. So, will she get the one from Souichirou? And if she does get a sword

from Souichirou, does this mean that the one at the shrine is still there?)

Realizing I have been 'staring' at nothing during my inner monologue, I lightly shook my head and turned to look at the boss man.

"Mister Takagi I presume?" I ask as I strap my backpack back on me.

"Yes, I am Souichiro Takagi, and you must be Sepfier Naier, from what my wife informed me." He answers as he turns his head away from me. I turn to glance where he was looking at, only to see the guard from before still glaring at me with a disapproving face. At least he did so, until he realized that Souichiro was staring at him. Where he quickly moved to fix the barricade afterward.

"Did Miss Takagi Inform you about the 'situation' back at the estate?" I ask.

"Not in detail," He bluntly replies.

"But whatever is going on back at the estate can wait, we can't leave right now. Not until the power plant is operational again." He continues.

(Well, that's just great. It's not like it won't all be for naught after the nuke blast anyway. Not that I can tell him that. Or do power plants have some sort of safety measures against EMP? Uhh whatever, more importantly, I need to convince Souichirou to come back to the estate.)

"No, it can't. Somebody is trying to gather the people at the estate in order to take control of the place by. Uhh, a majority of vote? And, well. From what I've been told by Miss Takagi, he seems to be doing a pretty good job so far. Pretty much all of the refugees are apparently already listening to his preaches." I stop for a second as I glance towards the window behind the tall man.

(Well, I don't know if that's what he's really trying to do, but I don't care as long as it gets Shido kicked the fuck out my lawn, or his, seeing as it's his house.)

"The name of the person responsible is Koichi Shido." I fold my arms as I finish speaking.

I remember from the anime, that Souichiro had some sort of connection with Shido's father, and that did not hold his father in very high esteem. I hoped that this will be enough motivation to make him come along.

"Even so, the guards at the estate should be more than enough to deal with one stray dog that thinks itself a wolf, no matter how many of its kind it brings along." Souichiro replied lightly with a wave of his hand. I sigh under my breath after hearing his answer.

"That guy ain't an idiot, I highly doubt that he would just do nothing or stupidly put his head on the line. He already has the support of the unarmed civilians, the guards won't be able to do much against 'all' of them." Souichiro just folds his arms and looks at me without speaking back.

"If he forces a conflict between the armed guards and the refugee's, nobody is going to win, other than him. The guards are far outnumbered by the refugees as they have to patrol the perimeter outside the estate. And, if the ones in the estate open fire against unarmed civilians, not only will it be a perfect reason to label them as 'Ineffective' at keeping order and blame it on you, thus gaining an even tighter grip on the remaining refugees." I glance at the rest of the guards before turning back to Souichiro.

"That would also make the refugees be even more distrustful of the 'armed and dangerous' men. At worst it can lead to a full revolt. And I'm pretty sure Shido is more than capable of fueling the fire. With their numbers, the guards will get overrun sooner or later. I can also guarantee you that, should he get the chance, he will use your wife or daughter as a hostage to get what he wants." Souichiro, just kept

staring at me after I finished talking. I could not see much of a change in his expression to be honest.

(Also Shido wants me dead. You know, nothing really important.)

"A driver, with me. I am returning to the estate" He finally speaks up with a stern expression.

(Pfew.)

The annoying guard lets out a silent groan as he moves to undo the barricade he just finished setting back up.

"I can drive." I say as I take the car keys out of my pocket.

(It's not that I don't want to stay here with ya lads. But I would rather be hanging around with Saeko, or Saya, or Kohta, or Shizuka, or Zeke.)

The people around just looked at me.

"Ain't you a bit too young to drive?" One of the guards speaks up.

"I'm too young to have a car license, not to drive. And right now, I don't need a license to drive." As I finish, another guard speaks up.

"You can't expect a kid to drive in a situation like this, one mistake could easily prove fatal." The same guard retorts.

(Ughh. Kid this, kid that. Now I see why Saya was getting extra grumpy in the estate.)

"Well, I did deal with the giant horde in the warehouse, and the group that was blocking the entrance while uhh, 'borrowing' one of your jeeps, and I'm still here. So I think I can manage 'not' crashing a car." I was actually grinning under my mask as I spoke.

"If you say you can drive, then you better be able to take the responsibility for your claim." Souichiro speaks up, causing whatever

protest there was from the guards to cease.

"And somebody radio in with the guards in the warehouse. If the horde was really driven away and they are still alive, tell them to return here and keep guard. Otherwise, continue as you were. I want the powerplant up and running by the time I'm back." And with Souichiro's order, the men scatter to do what they were just told. Without a word, I move down the stairs and look at the front door.

(Looks like shooting a gun was not a very bright idea after all. Well at least it also drew the attention of the guards here, who knows how long I'd have to search otherwise.)

Saya's father followed up behind me, then stared at the exit and street ahead, now filled with corpses.

"Hmm, wait here." Was all he said as he walked back up the stairs.

(Is there another exit up there? Hmm. No, he said that I should wait here, so he should return. He got a bazooka stashed up there or something?)

My question was answered a couple of minutes later, as Souichiro walked down the stairs, a pair of red, long, thin sticks in his hand.

(Ohh, OHHH. This guy loves his dynamites.)

"The noise will draw the ones blocking the door away, and as we are taking a car, we will use the second one to draw them away from the facility." Souichiro then starts walking towards the broken window I used to enter the building, lights up one of the dynamites with a lighter, and with a strong throw. He tosses the dynamite towards the oncoming corpses in the distance.

(And I was supposed to save 'this' dude? Yuriko must be pulling my leg...)

Seconds later, a loud explosion shook the ground, this one being far away from the building. Needless the say, with a noise that loud, the door was clear of corpses in a matter of seconds.

"Move out." Souichiro orders and he starts moving towards the door, sword in hand as he sidesteps over the bodies on the ground.

Once he was at the door he opened it after unlocking it, and then started moving towards the parked vehicles. I just followed behind him...

"Which car did you use?" He turns to me as he speaks. And I point at the jeep that was parked a bit further away from the rest of the vehicles.

He nods, turns around and starts walking towards the jeep I pointed out. Once we reached the jeep, I entered the driver's seat as he got on the passenger's seat. Then plugged in the keys back in the ignition and started the engine. Souichiro lowered the window in the meantime.

"Move towards the west fence." He orders once again.

(Yes my master. I also kind of like your daughter.)

I chuckle silently as I turn the car around and drive towards the toppled fence. The moment the jeep left the premise of the facility, Souichiro lights up the second dynamite. And tosses it out of the window, away from the facility.

I press on the pedal a little harder, causing the car to speed up, getting away from the horde that was going to arrive soon. And then, a second deafening explosion.

"So, now that that's done. Could you direct me towards the estate? I don't know this place very well." I say as I glance at Souichirou. He just nodded while taking a radio out of his pocket.

"Yuriko, I am returning to the estate. Inform the guards to find Koichi Shido and bring him to the estate's entrance." Just as Souichiro stops speaking, I butt in.

"Uhhh. Also, it will be for the best if I am not seen with you when you meet with Shido. I don't think the refugees that are with Shido will react well when they see me and... "

"Yuriko informed me about your 'problem'. It will not be necessary to hide. The people that want to follow Koichi can share the same fate as him." Souichiro turns to me as he interrupts my interruption. He then turns to look at the street ahead nonchalantly,

(The same, fate? And I like this guy's daughter? Unless I'm reading what's he's implying terribly wrong, I must have a god damn deathwish.)

"After we have climbed over the hill, turn right on the next intersection, then keep going straight" I just nodded at what Souichiro said and kept my eyes on the road.

"It didn't seem like your team needed any rescue in the end..." I speak up a couple of seconds later.

"Because we didn't. We were simply unlucky that when the western fence fell and they got into the facility, our long-range communication equipment got destroyed during the horde's attack. Still, we had managed to contain the corpses that managed to get into the building into one part of the facility, and were in no danger from being overrun or running out of supplies any time soon." Souichiro keeps looking down the street as he speaks.

"But, we were unable to relay such information back. So the estate was left with the knowledge that we're being overrun by a horde. It is understandable that Yuriko wanted to mount a rescue team. I did not expect just one person though." He adds as he glances at me, looking like he was sizing me up.

"Neither did Miss Takagi. This whole thing was my idea, as she was opposed to me coming here alone, and was going to send a normal rescue team tomorrow. But, with how Shido was going after my neck at the estate, and his ever-increasing influence, sitting on my thumbs hoping for something to happen, was not an option. In any case. I still think that I shouldn't be present when you meet with Shido. If he doesn't know I helped, he will at least have one less thing to crow on." I lean my head back on the headrest as I finish speaking.

"Do as you wish then." He answers. And with that, the car fell back into silence.

(Hmm, now that I think about it, how many days do we have till the nuke? Right now it should be, one day before the group reaches the estate in the Original Timeline, if we base it on the anime. And in the anime they stayed there for a day, or two? Uhhh. At least the sun is still out, so I got some time before this day ends. Should I try to E.M.P proof some equipment? But, how do I explain that to the others? I don't think I look THAT paranoid... yet.)

-Sometime later-

"Turn left here, and go straight, we should end up at a barricade. The guards have been informed that we are coming, if you want to get out without anyone in the estate seeing you, now is the time." I nod as Souichiro speaks. And as he said, a barricade came into view not long after I turned the car to the left.

Two guards were standing by a concrete barricade, guns in hand, with a forklift next to them. Getting near the barricade, I start to slow down the car until it finally stops next to the guards. I then exit the car and walk to the guards.

"You two again? Small world... " I say as I look at the guards that had driven me to the power plant.

"Ohh, Ninja boy! What's the matter? Go on, Miss Takagi has informed us of your arrival." The first guard speaks up with a grin.

"There has been a change of plans. One of you will have to drive Mr. Takagi to the estate. I got an errand to run." And the grin instantly disappears from the guard's face as he stares at the jeep behind me.

(Have fun saying jokes next to the scary big boss.)

I smirk as I start walking away, rifle hanging on my sides.

(Still. Ninja boy, better than Ninja penguin.)

I look at the buildings that surrounded the street as I kept walking

"Hey! Are these buildings clear?" I shout as I turn my head towards the guards.

"Yes! And they have been picked clean, so you won't find any chocolate bars in there!" The same guard speaks up before entering Souichiro's car.

(Hmm. Interesting.)

I continue walking down the street, the estate now visible to my far left.

(So. How do I go from here to there? I need to get back inside, undetected.)

I think as I take a turn to the left upon reaching the first intersection.

(For now, let's just get near the entrance.)

I heard the jeep's engine zoom past behind me as it kept going straight instead of turning to the left as I did.

(And now I want some chocolate. Retarded ass guard and his retarded ass jokes. At least, I did eat while I was being held captive, so it's not like I'm starving or something.)

I chuckle to myself as I keep walking down the street...

After several minutes, I reached the next intersection and took a turn to the right. The estate was now a straight road ahead from where I was standing.

(Wonder what Souichirou will do. He seems more than capable of handling Shido without causing a fight to break out. Or well, I hope he does.)

As I closed in towards the estate, I could make out figures behind the gates. Lots of them.

I stop and look consideringly around at the houses that were next to me.

(I better not show up yet, too many people at the gates. I can stay in one of the nearby houses for some time until the estate's driveway clears out.)

As I could not think of a better plan, I moved to the side of the road, towards the fence door of a house and gave it a push. The door opened with no resistance. The moment I walk inside, I lift my rifle and look down the sights.

(They did say the houses are clear, but I'm not taking any chances.)

I looked around the yard before turning my sight towards the house itself.

The door-sized window that led into the house was wide open, the curtains blowing outwards, giving me a clear view of the insides.

(Looks clear.)

I slowly move towards the window and peek inside.

(Is clear.)

I walk inside the house through the window, and do a quick scan of the room.

(Looks like a living room. The building is a two-story apartment so there should be a staircase somewhere.)

I moved deeper into the house. It seems that the living room was next to the kitchen and between them a hallway that continued to the right.

(A kitchen next to the living room and with no wall between them? Who the hell wants to constantly smell food when sitting in the living room?)

I move to the hallway and with the gun still ready. And shortly after, along the hallway, I found the staircase that led to the second floor. I climb the stairs up and end up in another hallway that extends to my left and right. There was also a closed-door straight ahead of me.

(Well, all clear so far.)

I look around the hallway and decide to go to the right as it was the corridor with a room that would let me see the estate's gate. As I got closer, I realized that the room was already open. So I peek through the open door before completely opening it.

(A bedroom, empty.)

I enter the bedroom and close the door behind me. I then move to the window and get out on the balcony. I could now fully see the gate from the balcony. I nod and move back into the room, doing a quick last check. Closet, room corners, ceiling, under the bed, the usual stuff.

(No corpses, ghosts, or croaking evil spirits. Time to finally sit back and relax.)

I move back out to the balcony, close the window behind me and sit down, my back against the railing. I then took off my rifle and removed the magazine, unloading all the bullets left in it.

(Two, three, five, six counting the one in the chamber. Hmm, gonna need to restock when I get back in the estate.)

I start loading the bullets back in the magazine. And let out a yawn in the process.

(Guhh, c'mon I'll sleep later at the estate, leave me alone.)

I shake my head and finish loading the magazine, then slap it back in the gun. After that I turn to stare absentmindedly at the gate. I could still see the mass gathered near the gate, but that's about it. I could not 'hear' any sort of commotion.

(What's happening there? Ehh, whatever. It doesn't concern me yet.)

I then turn my head to the sky.

(I wonder if any of the 'stuff' from the anime and manga happened while I was gone.

Like Saya going ballistic about her Kohta having to fend off the people that wanted his guns. Though in the anime, that happened after Souichiro returned. What I do know is that Takashi and Saeko should not be as close as they were in the anime during the events at the estate. For one, they did not go to the shrine so they should not be so, intimate with each other. I mean, I hope they are not... Bleh, time to change the subject.)

And like this, time started to pass. Ten minutes? twenty minutes. Two minutes? I lost track of time since nothing was really happening.

(I think I'm going to fall asleep if this goes on...)

I grumbled as I looked back at the gate. Except this time, it was wide open.

(H..Huh?)

I reflexively lower my body, and intently keep staring at the gate. I could see two figures moving away from the estate.

(Somebody's leaving?)

Shortly after, two more figures started walking behind the other two, while still keeping a good distance away from them. I just kept staring, until finally. I could make out the features on the two people on the front.

(A snake... and a donkey.)

In other words Shido and Tsunoda. I jump to my feet and run back into the room so those two won't accidentally see me as they walk down the road.

(They got kicked out? Ohh, SHIT. This, this could be it. My proof that things can change.

No Shido and no bus, which means no broken barricade. No broken barricade means no overrun estate. No... no, no, calm down Naier. Even if Shido is getting kicked out, there's still the possibility of another truck 'somehow' hitting the barricade anyway. Or that the nuke could explode while the barricades are being moved by the forklifts. There are still a lot of things that can go wrong. Still, this is a BIG step towards what I'm looking for.)

My brain was going into overdrive as I jumped down the stairs. I exit the building from the same way I entered it and hide behind the concrete fence wall.

(From the direction they were going, they should probably pass through here. I should stay hidden so Shido won't see me.)

With that, I kneel down next to the concrete wall and wait. And a couple of minutes later.

"You don't understand! I never did anything wrong, they are lying, they are trying to frame me!" A voice could be heard from the distance, slowly getting louder.

"And why the fuck only the two of us are getting kicked out! Yuuki gets to be spared because she can fake her tears and shake her tits?!" I could hear another voice now, this one sounding rather angry, pissed off.

(Tsunoda. Hmm, wait. Yuuki was spared? Well, she is shown to be able to seduce people in the manga and the anime. But I doubt Souichiro would fall for that. Did the guards protect her? Uhh, whatever. A problem to deal with later.)

"All I did was try to protect you people, why don't you understand that! You still have time to make this right! Don't make this mistake!" I pushed my back against the wall as Shido's voice got closer and closer, not that it mattered. But ehh, reflexes.

(From the way they run their mouths. Seems like the guards are not on 'their' side, good. For me that is.)

And soon I could hear them right behind the fence, still talking, still shouting.

"Come on man, we won't survive out there like this. I am just a school kid! What are you expecting me to do? Wrestle with these monsters barehanded?! You are going to kill us!"

(Tsunoda, is really going at it.)

"OHH! For the love of, will you two shut up already! No matter how much to scream at us things won't change. This decision was made by Mister Takagi because of your actions during his absence." One of the guards, probably fed up by all the yapping by the two, speaks up.

"You are making a fatal mistake!" Shido was probably about to snap, as he shouts sounded rather distressed. And as the seconds passed, their voices started to fade away again...

I peeked outside to see that the guards, along with Shido and Tsunoda, had moved past the fence door and were moving towards the barricade that was located down the road. I silently walk out the door and start following behind them. Other than a forklift, I could also see no guards at the barricade, meaning the only guards around here were these two.

(Did the other guys stationed here go back to the estate?)

Once we got near the barricade I moved to the right and entered the nearest house, hiding behind the concrete wall once more. Shortly after that I hear the sound of an engine coming alive.

"You take one step in the wrong direction, and you are dead. Understood?" One of the guards speaks up.

(Hmm, one of em is using the forklift?)

And after a minute or so.

"Out." one of the guards barks.

"At least give us something to defend ourselves with!" Tsunoda shouts, he had probably given up on getting spared, so now he was begging for equipment. I hear one of the guards groan in response.

"Fine... Catch!" I could not actually see what was happening. But by the snickering I could hear, I had a pretty good idea.

"Dude, I am not giving you my knife later, now that you've tossed yours." The other guards speak up while snickering.

"You people. Are a disgrace to humankind. Do you enjoy making people suffer?" Shido asks. I could 'feel' the scowl on his face.

(Ohh? Did Shido find himself a mirror?)

"Shut up and get out, you wanted a knife, you got a knife. Now scram!" The guard shouts. And seconds later, I heard the sound of a gun bolt 'clacking'.

"Don't make me repeat myself... sir"

(That was the most sarcastic sir if I ever heard one. I already like that guy.)

"Ok, ok we are leaving, we are leaving... " I turn to look at the rifle in my hands as I hear Shido speak.

(If he leaves now, he still might make it to the evacuation zone like in the manga. I'll follow him for a bit, see if I can make out what he will try to do next. No time to lose.)

I got up and ran into the house, ending up in a living room once again.

(Same layout as before... Is this place some kind of housing complex?)

I ran to the stairs that were in the hallway, climbed them and then turned to the left and ran down the corridor until I was at the door in the far end. I entered what used to be a kids room and ran to the window on the left wall of the room, and then looked outside.

(Bullseye.)

I had a clear view of the whole road leading away from the barricade now. It seems like Shido and Tsunoda were going straight down the road.

(So, they are going straight. The next intersection is a good distance away. So I should be able to track them for a short while.)

Several seconds later Tsunoda runs up to the side of the road, kneels down and picks something up. Before turning back to walk down the street next to Shido.

(He has the knife? Good to know...)

I turned my sight to the guards that had just finished fixing up the barricade, and were walking away.

(Alright. No time like the present.)

I grip my gun and run back down. Once at the fence door, I peek outside and see the guards walking away towards my left. I wait for a couple of seconds before taking a deep breath and exit the house. Then turn to the right and head straight towards the barricade.

(Jumping over that might be a problem with that barbed wire on the top. Hmm, I could enter the house next to the barricade and jump over the fence wall. Ok, let's do that.)

Course of action settled, I moved to the right and walked to the fence door of the house that was right next to the barricade. I enter it, and once inside the yard I turn to the left and run towards the concrete fence wall. Using the momentum, I climb the wall, and stay up there. Checking what was on the other side, along with the surrounding area. I could see corpses moving around, nothing too freaky though.

(Guess they are focused on keeping some barricades clear of corpses? They will probably want to use a road if they have to abandon the estate, so they try to keep them clean?)

I jump down the wall and end roll forward to 'muffle' the sound. Once I was down on the road, I walked up to the barricade and looked to my right, at the road that extended ahead. I could see two figures jogging in the distance.

(There ya are ya little shits.)

I look at the corpses around me as I grab the rifle with both hands, switch the safety to semi-auto and start moving down the road. I was still a bit far from them, so they could easily mistake me for a corpse if I acted like one. Yet, they never bothered looking back, they just kept going forward. And after a while they stopped jogging, and started trying to walk around any corpse that blocked their way.

(Wonder if Tsunoda's flip flops make noise when he walks...)

Thanks to the fact that I was alone, and better prepared. I was able to close the distance between me and them pretty fast. And as their figures became clearer. My mind kept repeating the same question over, and over again.

(I could end Shido right here, and now. Should I really go through with it though? It is one thing killing a corpse that is pretty much a walking meat bag with no cognitive ability whatsoever, and another killing a living human being. Even if that human being is a dumpster fire that also tried to kill me twice. Still, what will the others think of me if they find out that I went, and actively tried, or did kill somebody? And well, they do say that if you go down that path once...)

I let out a sigh through my teeth as I kept staring at Shido's back.

(Uhhh, but if I let that slimeball go and the whole thing continues the way the manga did. He will get to the evacuation center. And I will be at a huge disadvantage there, if I'm still alive till then that is. For one, it will be after the last chapter of the manga. Meaning, no knowledge of what will happen, and Shido proved one too many times that he wants me dead. And his third try, without me having an inkling of what he might do, in a location I have no idea about, might be his lucky one.)

I grip my rifle a little harder.

(I should follow them for now. Maybe, maybe he will have different plans. And who knows. He might not even know there's even an

evacuation. No need to jump the gun, even if I hate his ass.)

And step by step I got closer, up to a point that I could hear them talk.

"... going to do now sir... we won't survive out here alone." I heard part of Tsunoda's question as I closed in.

"I heard from the refugees that there's an evacuation zone at the Shintoko Third Elementary School. We will head there." Tsunoda's expression looked like a scowl after hearing Shido's answer.

(Well, shit...)

"What? That is way too far. We'll never make it." Shido nods at what Tsunoda said before he started speaking again.

"That is true. So, we will return to the estate to 'borrow' some equipment." I could see Shido's face turning to a smirk as he spoke.

"As you saw yourself, the barricade was unmanned. It won't be, too hard to get back inside later. After we get through the barricade all we will have to do is wait for an opportunity to get inside the estate, and trust me, one will come. After all, these people are not trained soldiers. They will make a mistake sooner or later. And if not, we can create a situation that would benefit us. Say for example, an ill-placed barricade maybe?" Shido responds with a slight grin as he speaks.

(Oh that son of a... No. no, no. Stay calm. Just, listen. Don't overreact. Not, yet.)

Tsunoda lets out a huff as Shido finishes speaking and starts talking to himself.

"Ohh I do want to get back at the bastards. Though I wish I could do so myself, rather than let these undead freaks do the job for us." Tsunoda stabs the air around him in quick motions as he responds.

"And that slut Yuuki. I bet she seduced the guards to avoid getting thrown out. Now she's in there, sitting safely on her ass. While we are here trying to avoid being eaten alive." He stops stabbing his imaginary foe and turns to look at the knife he's holding.

"After we lost that bus. Everything has been going to shit." I could see Shido's face turning grim as Tsunoda spoke.

"Yes. It was really unfortunate that we lost that bus because of that transfer student and his little group. And after that, we lost everybody other than you and Yuuki. And now, even Yuuki has betrayed us. Why did this have to happen, Souichiro was supposed to be stuck at that powerplant based on what the guards said. Yet he just appeared shortly after that transfer student and his group arrived. Did they have something to do with this?" Shido narrowed his eyes as he spoke.

"That fucking inbred hypocrite, I knew he was no good the moment we picked him up. We should have left him back at the school to rot." Tsunoda keeps staring at his knife as he speaks.

(Keep talking shit donkey. It is doing reeeaaal good for you right now...)

"Indeed, we could have avoided all of this had we not picked him up. To think that he even managed to split our group in two." After that last jab at my character, even if they 'knew' otherwise, they continued walking in silence.

(Ok. They're definitely up to no good. So, what now? I shoot them? I can't let them sabotage the barricades...)

Tsunoda being unaware that I was about to decide their fates, spoke up again.

"That house. Did it really belong to the Takagi's?" Tsunoda asks, Shido sighs as he looks ahead of him.

"Yes, a real shame we didn't manage to, persuade the people in there." He chuckled.

"Damn. that foul-mouthed bitch has more than just her looks huh." Tsunoda chuckles to himself.

"But she just had to tag along with that fucking retard and his friends. Wonder what bullshit he filled her with to make her agree on leaving the safety of the bus? Ohh, if I just had some time alone with her. I could show her what she was missing." Tsunoda lifts his knife to head-high as he smirks.

"I would make her moan like a b..."

Yet... he never managed to finish his sentence. As he fell forward, hitting the ground with a loud thud. A slight trail of gunpowder smoke coming out from my gun's muzzle. And Tsunoda, now laid motionless on the floor, blood seeping out from the hole in his head, painting the street under him red.

Shido, just froze for a couple of seconds, staring at Tsunoda's dead body. I stayed silent as I started walking towards him, with my gun now pointed at him. The sound of the shot had already made it obvious that I was there. So Shido turned his eyes toward me, before turning his whole body towards me. Each step I took forward, was a step he took backward. He started flapping his mouth to speak, but nothing came out. Until...

"You... you killed him..." He squeaked out. I didn't reply, I just kept walking towards him.

"You've... you've gone crazy! You... you just committed murder!" He shouts, pointing his finger at me as he keeps taking steps backward. Again, I didn't reply. I just kept moving forward, the gun still pointed at his face.

"St, Stay away from me! Don't come any closer!" He shouts. I lower my gun slightly and lift my head from the gun's sights, then I stop

walking. Shido, seeing that I had 'listened' to his demand, stops moving and opens his mouth again.

"I was right, you... YOU ARE!..."

"Behind you." I cut him off.

Shido instantly stopped talking as his eyes went wide, realizing that a pair of hands were going over his shoulders. And then, a scream as he fell forward. A corpse biting the back of his neck as it also feels on top of him. I start walking towards him again, this time stopping a few feet away from his flailing arms.

"Congratulations. You just turned me into what you kept portraying me to be. Feeling proud yet?" Blood was flowing from the back of his neck as he kept trying to shake the corpse off his back. But, He was already bitten, even if he did somehow manage to escape. He would not survive, not as a human at least.

I turn around and walk past the corpse that was creeping up behind me and start walking forward. I gave Tsunoda's dead body a quick glance as I walked past it from a distance, corpses slowly starting to gather around it as well.

The sound of screaming was now slowly being taken over by the sound of corpse moaning. Yet, I just kept moving forward. Towards the barricade. Which I reached in what felt like the blink of an eye.

I climbed over the same cement fence which I used to exit the barricade's perimeter, then left the yard from the open fence door. After glancing at the barricade, I started moving straight towards the estate's gate, my rifle still glued in my hands. With each step I took, the gate seemed to grow larger. Yet, before I could reach it, a voice stopped me.

"Are you Naier?" I turn to the questioning voice to see a guard looking at me, I answer with a nod.

"Finally, where did you disappear to? Mr. Takagi asked us to find you after you took too long to appear at the gates." The guard turns around and motions to me to follow him as he starts walking towards the gate.

"You missed quite the show! Mister Takagi made quite the fool out of this Shido dude before kicking him out. Heh, even his followers bailed on him." The guard says in a merry tone.

I just kept silent and looked at the guard for a couple of seconds before turning my sight towards the locked gate. He then grabbed a radio that was hanging from his chest pocket and spoke up again.

"Miss Takagi we found Naier, bringing him from the gates right now." And with that, we kept moving forward towards the gate in silence. A couple of minutes later, I could see people gathering behind the gates.

And as we got close, I could see who these people were. The moment the gates opened, they gathered around me. Speaking, shouting, whispering, talking. Yet, I could hear nothing. I just kept walking forward, moving past them without saying a word. I could feel their stares on my back now. I stop and turn my head slightly toward them.

"I'm tired. I'm going to sleep... "

Hit the books

They say some people tend to sleep a lot when they are dealing with big changes. You know, sleeping it off as they might say, letting the brain sort itself out or something. Or well. Maybe I was just really tired. I mean for one, I don't even remember going to sleep.

(Ughh, why do I feel so sore?)

I groan as I open my eyes, to get greeted by a white ceiling. At least, I fell asleep in an actual room and not under a tree or something. I close my eyes again as I lift my arm up and land it on my face. Or, that was my initial aim, as my hand landed on my mask instead.

(I didn't take off my mask again? Huh, figures.)

I lift my mask and rub my eyes as I get up to a sitting position. And, upon opening my eyes, I see that it was not just the mask that I did 'not' take off.

(I slept with all my clothes on? Even my shoes? Ohh boy, somebody is going to be pissed at me for ruining the bed.)

The open window to my right, was letting more than enough sun inside to light up the room. Along with a cold breeze that kept creeping up on my face, helping me shake off that annoying drowsy feeling. I let out a slight sigh and shook my head as I slid to the bottom of the bed so I could sit normally. I then rest my elbows on my knees and I look straight ahead, at the giant mirror that was on the opposite side. My sight immediately falls on the assault rifle that was still strapped on to me...

(Well, no wonder I'm so sore.)

I look away from the mirror and turn my sight to the rifle. The safety... was still off.

Whatever drowsiness I had quickly disappeared, as I started to remember yesterday's events. I rested my thumb on the safety switch and flicked it back on. Then let out a sigh, thanking the stars that I didn't turn and toss as I slept...

(So I went and did it. I've actually killed Tsunoda and Shido. It's not like they didn't have it coming though. Letting them walk would have ended with more people getting killed because of them. But still, am I supposed to feel nothing about it right now?

Because... that's exactly what I feel, nothing. I don't feel conflicted, or think that I could have handled it in a better way. Nor do I feel any sort of grief or remorse for killing them. I mean, sure I hated them. But, did I really become so numb after just a couple of days into the outbreak? To shoot somebody in the head and just walk it off? To look at a person being eaten alive and not even flinch, even if it was Shido.)

I lift my head and look back at my reflection on the mirror.

(Sadly, I don't think that's a question I can actually answer. Also, I have a bigger problem to deal with right now, that, being 'my' group. Should I come clean and tell them about it? Holding secrets will only cause problems down the road. But, how will they react?...

Takashi in the anime tried to stop Rei from killing Shido one too many times,⁹ even after they arrived at the estate and he found out why she hated him so much. So he's probably against killing living people. And, whether I like it or not, he has a strong voice in the group.

Rei will probably side with Takashi, and I have no reason to think otherwise. She would probably be fine with the fact that I killed Shido, but I don't know how she would react to the fact that I well, killed someone.

Kohta... Kohta is a wild card in this matter. He was capable of shooting that cop girl he liked, even if that was a mercy kill, which is

quite different from what I did. But, he should be able to understand, I hope.

Saya I can't really tell. In the anime it was never really shown how tolerant she would be of such an action. Or if it was indeed shown, I don't remember it.

Shizuka would definitely be against it. But then again, I can't bring myself to think that she would agree to for example say. Kick me out of the group.

On the other hand, I don't know her all that well either.

Alice, yeah, not gonna count her. But, if she was scared of me before. Well, she has one more reason now.

And lastly, Saeko. Secret sadist aside, she seems like somebody who would understand, I think.

So that's, three that would probably have a negative reaction, two that will probably be understanding, and one that I have no idea how they would react...

Yeaa, now I know how some characters feel when they are making a decision that feels 'right', but looks completely wrong when looked at from another person's perspective. I think, I will keep my mouth shut. After all, shooting somebody should be a last resort. Or well, I need to make sure it would be a last resort. Then again, in the world we are now, there will be people that will shoot first, ask questions later. Acting passively against them would be equal to suicide. Or worse. Guess, I will have to do as the ancient Greeks said, 'everything in moderation'. Although I don't think they actually included killing in that 'everything'... Uhhh... I... I need to get it the fuck together...)

I lower my head and give it a couple of slaps from both sides at the same time.

(You knew it was only a matter of time before something like this happened. What's done is done. I simply did what I thought was the best course of action, and I do, still think that it was the best course of action. I have bigger problems to deal with right now. Problems such as nukes, corpses and derailing trucks.)

I switch the rifle's safety off, then back on again and reach for my cell phone in my right pocket, only to find the pocket empty.

(Uhhh, ohhh right. They took my phone after I got arrested. I should go ask Yuriko to give it back.)

I get up from the bed, lower my mask, and stretch as I turn towards the door.

(Ok, let's get going, we got stuff to do.)

I move to the door and twist the handle, but the door stays closed.

(Hmm, locked?)

I looked at the door to see the key was in the keyhole.

(I locked the door? Wonder what other crap I did that I don't remember...)

I unlock the door and open it, then move to the hallway outside, and look around.

(Hmm empty. At least there are no guards by my door, so I guess I'm no longer a prisoner.)

With no destination in mind, I take a turn to the left and start walking down the hallway.

(Gotta find Saya's parents and get my phone back, gotta check the internet. Internet, last time I checked, it was still alive. But that was two days ago or so? Still, as long as some power plants in the local area keep running, I should hypothetically still be able to log in on

some sites. And it's still too early for all the power plants to burn out because of the lack of maintenance and/or lack of personnel. So either I get my phone or find a computer in the estate and then I could gather information on things I need to know.

Stuff like H.A.N.E distance and damage to electrical devices. And more importantly, DIY survival tricks, like water desalination, starting up fires, all the good stuff. I 'had' several printed papers of that crap back in my house, but I didn't take them with me because I'm a fucking idiot. Or I didn't think I'd survive this long to worry about it and was too laser focused on surviving the first day.)

I was starting to wonder why the hallways were devoid of life. When I noticed, after looking out of the window to my right, that everybody seemed to have gathered outside. Also, the rest of the vehicles from the powerplant had returned. I move closer to the window and look outside. Saya's dad was standing on a big platform-like structure, looking at the mass of people that had gathered to it

(Was that always there?)

It looked like he was speaking to said masses about something. I could not really hear jack from up here.

(To be honest, it looks like that platform from the anime, where he decapitates that zombified guy that was supposed to have worked for him for a very long time or something. Except, this time that guy ain't there. Was he already executed? I don't see a cage though.)

I turn away from the window and continue walking down the hallway.

(No matter, As I now have to wait for them to finish before asking for my phone. I could search the house while they are busy for some kind of computer... Nah. I'd rather not start sniffing around the house without permission, lest I get on the bad side of Saya's parents for sticking my nose where they don't want.)

I kept walking down the hallways until I found a set of stairs to my right that led to the lower floor. So I turn to the right, and go down the stairs. Then keep going straight towards the open door that led to the giant yard in the front of the house. The same yard that everybody was gathered at.

(Hmm, the refugees could still be thinking that I might stab them in their sleep because of Shido. Better stay in the corner for now.)

With that, I exit the front door and look around the courtyard. Right now, the mass of people was to my right, towards the center of the yard, with Souichiro speaking to them. The main part of the house behind him.

As I Couldn't go towards the main house now with 'that' going on, I turned to the left and kept walking, until I found a nice shady spot under a tree to sit down, then turned my sight towards Souichiro's group once more.

(I also need to find some ammo for my guns and... ughh, where is a pen and paper when you need it. I'm definitely going to forget something like this...)

And then, I just stayed there... waiting. I spent God knows how long looking at a speech that I could barely hear. Until finally, after a long drag, I started to see people that slowly broke away from the mass, walking towards the refugee camps.

I nod, get up, and slowly start walking towards where Souichiro was at.

(Come to think of it. I'm really lucky I know Saya, otherwise, they would probably throw me out to sleep in a tent or something. One more thing I owe to our pink-haired tsundere I guess.)

As I kept moving towards Mr. and Ms. Takagi, I also spotted my group, all gathered up on the platform and next to Saya's parents.

(They are there too? Ehh, of course they are there. So, uhh, let's see. They will probably ask me why I went full on edge-lord mode when I brushed them off yesterday at the gates. And 'Me sleepy' ain't gonna cut it. Gotta think of something, or improvise. Won't be the first time...)

With that in mind, I kept a steady pace towards my destination. To be honest I did get a couple of side glances from the people that were leaving. But none of them spoke up or tried to do something. Though, if they believed Shido, it would make sense they would not try to tick me off... At least not when I had two loaded guns on me...

Now sadly, by the time I arrived at the platform, Saya's parents had already returned into the main house, so I couldn't ask Yuriko about my phone. My group was still here though, so maybe I could ask Saya if there was a computer here I could use.

(Well, let's get this over with. Who knows, maybe I'm just overthinking things here. And they won't try to drill me for an explanation.)

I got up on the platform and walked towards the group while they had their backs turned to me. All dressed up in their 'estate' attire. Saeko in the kimono, Saya in that frilly dress, Kohta in his green jumpsuit thingy and so on.

(Looking at their new clothes reminds me that I need to take a bath and change as well. Wonder if they have anything black in here.)

And, as I got closer...

"... t your dad is really something Takagi." I heard Takashi speaking.

"Oh, yes. He's 'amazing' alright... " Saya's voice, had an obvious tinge of sarcasm in its tone.

(I will go on a limb and say that Saya has yet to reconcile with her parents. Otherwise she wouldn't sound so 'toxic' when talking about

her dad.)

"At least the people here no longer listen to Shido, hope the bastard dies out there." Rei speaks up right after Saya.

(Uhh. Wish granted?)

"Rei, while I admit he is a horrible person. Don't you think that that's a bit harsh?" Takashi turns to look at Rei with a concerned look on his face. She just stares back at him silently for a while, before turning her attention back towards the refugees.

(Yeah, I think not mentioning how I let Shido get eaten alive after I passed a bullet through Tsunoda's head is for the best at the moment...)

"And we have other things to deal with right now, Sepfier has still to explain why he acted like that at the gates." Takashi then continues to speak.

(And of course, mister group leader is going to stick his nose in everybody's business...)

"He said he was tired, Takashi, is it really that weird? I am sure he will explain if we just ask him after he's up." Kohta turns towards Takashi as he speaks.

To be honest it felt good, to hear Kohta defending me while I was not present. Also, speaking of being present, I think it was about time I stopped 'creeping'.

"And I also had to play the pied piper with a horde of corpses. So excuse me if I came off as hostile. I was pretty much running on fumes when I arrived. That's all there is to it." I speak up as I start walking towards the group, causing them to turn around and stare at me.

"That's all I got as an explanation. Also, uhh. Good morning? It is morning... right?" I ask as I look around. And after a couple of seconds passed, with the group still staring at me like I'm some sort of idiot.

"It's almost seven am, Naier. You have been asleep for about fifteen hours." Saeko finally breaks the silence.

"Well, I did tell y'all that I was tired. Didn't I? I always used to sleep a lot so, I guess it just caught up to me..." I put my hand under my chin as I slightly lowered my head, as if I'm telling something serious and profound. The group just stayed quiet as they stared at me.

"Wait..." And Saeko speaks up again.

"So what you are telling us is. That while you were tired enough to ignore your surroundings. You decided to go to an infested power plant, and act as bait for a horde? Alone, without telling us a thing? And after you got back, you decided to wait outside of the estate by yourself?" She folds her arms as she 'barageses' me with questions.

(And, I just dug myself a hole...)

"Uhh... noooo?" I 'answer' as I shrug my shoulders slightly.

(Yeah, there's no way she's buying that.)

"Naier..." Saeko narrows her eyes as she stares, scratch that. Glares at me.

"Fine, I messed up, I was tired and made a couple of bad decisions. You made your point. Ain't gonna happen again, promise." I say as I raise my arms in defeat. Saeko, just sighs.

"If you understand." She then turns around.

"Mister Takagi asked me to meet with him after his speech was done, I should not keep him waiting." She says as she starts walking

away towards the mansion, only to stop a couple of steps later, turns around, and look at me.

"One pm, be at the dojo Naier." She turns around one final time, and leaves for good this time.

(And... she's still pissed.)

I turn to look at the group, to see them all still staring at me...

"You people, do understand that she will try to beat the crap out of me right?" I say as I point my finger towards Saeko's back.

"Yeaaa, sure. Beat the 'crap' out of you..." Takashi speaks up as he glances at Saeko a couple of times, he also sounded a bit, sarcastic..

"Humph, I hope she does exactly that. Maybe you will stop being such an idiot then." I turned to the whiny voice to see Saya, who had her arms folded under her chest and was giving me one hell of a glare.

"Actually, you have a dojo here?" I 'asked' trying to 'change' the subject.

She keeps glaring at me for a few seconds, until she finally speaks up.

"First floor. After the main door, go left and then straight. It's the only door at the end of the corridor." She says as she turns her head towards the house.

"And. What time is it now again?" I ask once more.

"Seven AM..." Shizuka speaks up.

"Umm, one last thing. Does this house have a library?" I fold my arms and look back at Saya.

"Through the main door, then right and then the first door to your left. But, why are you asking?" She asks as she raises an eyebrow.

"Other than finding how to deal with broken bones? I would rather have some books or take some notes with information on basic survival methods. And if possible, information on how to maintain energy generating equipment and/or how to do without them. I would rather be over-prepared, rather than unprepared..." And as I spoke, the group. Just stared at me, like a pack of fish.

(Really now?)

I sigh, and take a deep breath.

"I don't mean to be the bringer of bad news people. Especially after yesterday's little stunt. But you do realize just how dire our situation could become don't you? Take a scenario that will come sooner or later, a mass blackout. Because even though Sou... is doing his best, the power plants will go silent sooner or later, without the industrial capacity of the world to keep their condition.

How will you cook if you don't know how to light up a fire? How will you get clean water if the water taps run dry? How will you make an efficient light for the night without spending every single candle in existence? Or making a barricade that won't give way the moment some force is applied to it. And the list goes on and on..." I fold my arms as I keep speaking.

(Stuff like that, was never really mentioned in the anime. And if it did get mentioned, then it got passed up pretty fast, or got sugarcoated by a ton of fanservice a minute later. Now, there was nothing to sugarcoat. The danger was real, and it's coming at full speed.)

I also knew that talking about it would not be nice, but the group's facial expression turned way too grim nonetheless. Other than Saya that is, who just had a serious expression as she stared at the ground.

"But it won't get to that, right? People are already working towards fixing things, surely they can handle it right? Even here, Saya's parents are already fixing the power plants..." Rei was the first one to speak up.

"Yes, it might even be possible that the military has already handled the issue with the corpses, and is clearing them out from one side of the landmasse as we speak. But, would you rather place all your bets on one pile? Because if something goes wrong, you'll lose everything. I would rather keep a small amount on hand as insurance if nothing else. That means being self-sufficient. In other words, knowledge. Knowledge on how to make a car work, so you can have a hope of fixing your main transport if it breaks down. Knowledge on how to set up solar panels so you can have electricity if the grid fails completely." I stop speaking and glance towards Saya's house.

"I'm not saying we are going to pioneer rebuilding the world by ourselves, or that I have no faith in the people working towards fixing this mess. I mean hell, they know that stuff better than I do, and have more resources. But we need to be able to at least fend for ourselves... for the time being at least." I sighed as I looked at the group, to see them looking uncomfortable as hell...

"Look... I'm not trying to bring you all down to the dumps or anything like that. But this is our current situation right now. So with the resources we have at hand, use the time you have to your advantage.

The internet should still be functioning as the societal breakdown shouldn't have affected it yet. But we don't know if that will be the case after the first outage comes. Maybe the servers will need to be manually restarted or something, I don't really know how the internet works so I don't know what will happen. My point is, use your phones, search the internet while it still exists, look up on things that you would consider necessary. Then write them down or something, just to be safe..." I add up as I fold my arms.

(It will also keep you all from bickering with each other...)

The group just stared at the ground, nothing saying anything back at me...

(Ohh, For crying out loud. Why do they look like a bunch of kids that just got scolded. Talk about switching roles...)

"Well, if you don't mind, I'm going to take my paranoia to the library now. Uhhh, actually. Takagi, do you know where your mom is at? She confiscated my phone back when we were at the Humvee." I turned to look at Saya, who just looked at me and nodded.

"Go up the stairs after you enter the house. Mama usually stays in the first room you will find to your right side after the stairs." I nod at Saya, and start walking towards the house.

(I hope I was not too harsh on them. But, at least it stopped them from drilling me about yesterday. Or well, drilling each other overall.)

And so, a couple of minutes later, I was in the house's main hallway. I took a moment to look around at the insides of the luxurious building.

(Let's see, straight up the stairs then right is Saya's mom. First floor, to the right is the library. First floor to the left is, my funeral.)

I chuckle as I move up the stairs and then turn to the right before walking towards the first door to my right. Once there, I knock on the door.

"It's open." A calm female voice answers back.

I open the door and move inside. Saya's mother was indeed inside, sitting in front of a desk on the other side of the room, a set of papers in her hand.

"Oh?..Naier? Slept well? The others told me it was like you fell into a coma after returning." She asks after she lifts her head and looks at

me.

"I could sleep for another fifteen hours if I had the chance." I say jokingly as I scratch the back of my head. Yuriko, just smiles back at me.

"You need me for something? The engineers have returned from the powerplant today morning and we have a lot of work to do." She answers as she glances back at the papers.

"I just want my phones back. The ones you took after you umm, arrested me." I say as I tilt my head.

"Hmmm, ohh yes. I do have them here..." She opens a drawer in her table and after a bit of shuffling, she takes two phones out and puts them on the table, and then looks at me.

"One of them isn't yours, is it? They have a different name, number, and address. Or you have a double life?" She asks with a chuckle.

"Yeah one belonged to a deceased student, figured I could use it as a distraction of sorts."

(I mean, he, she? Is probably deceased. I never really bothered to learn who was in my class and, I don't even remember their faces now to be honest. Uhh wait, if they know that, that also means they searched both phones. Good thing I barely used it for uhh, stuff I'd rather not have other people find out...)

Yuriko nods and returns to her papers, I move the table and take the two cellphones.

"Thanks." I say as I put them in one of my side pockets, only getting a hum from Yuriko as a response. I then turn around, and walk towards the exit.

(Next stop, library.)

As I open the door, I stop and turn around towards Yuriko.

"Actually, does the library have a printer? If not, any paper and pencil?" I ask with my hand still on the door's handle. Yuriko raises her head from the documents and thinks for a second.

"I think the printer ran out of ink a couple of days ago. Here, you can have these" She opens the drawer again, and pulls out a multi-subject spiral textbook along with a pen, then slides it to 'my' corner of her desk.

I walk back to the desk, pick up the book along with the pen, then turn around to leave again.

"... watch after my daughter, alright?" Yuriko spoke up while I had my back turned to her.

"Kohta and Takashi should be better suited for that task. Apparently I'm prone at making bad decisions lately..." I say as I slightly turn my head back towards her.

"Yet so far, you're the only one that I see trying to 'do' something, other than wandering around like a lost kid that is." She answers back.

"... I'll see what I can do." I say as I start walking again.

(Weird, is Saya talking about leaving the estate already? I mean why would Yuriko ask anybody to protect her daughter when she is still within arms reach?)

With that over, I closed the door behind me. After thanking Yuriko of course, and headed straight to the library on the floor below.

(I forgot to ask Saya what type of books the library has. It will be quite funny, if after that whole speech with the group, all I end up finding in the library is romance novels)

So, with a short walk down stairs, and a right turn after I reached the bottom floor, I was at my destination. The door to the library, was a

large brown door with carved wooden, leaves?

(Fancy door, then again, this whole house is fancy.)

I opened the door and walked inside. And, I got to say, I was impressed.

(Well, holy shit. When did I end up in Hogwarts?)

The room was vastly different from the rest of the building. For starters, instead of marble, the floor was made out of wood. Then I could see several desks neatly lined up next to me on my right. The rest of the room was dominated by three long rows of bookshelves that hogged almost the entire room. And, on the opposite wall from where I was, a couple of windows.

The room was also rather chilly compared to the rest of the house, and it also smelled like... books.

(Won't wood make this place fire-prone though? Though, I guess a room filled with books is already fire-prone as it is. Uhh, no matter, time to do what I haven't done for half my life.)

I tossed the spiral textbook on a nearby desk and started searching out my quarry.

"Time to read some, books. Some break this turned out to be." I started by looking at what sort of arrangement the books had. And from what I could see, they were organized by genre. The genre itself set alphabetically, starting from the leftmost bookshelf.

(So... Let's see. I should be looking for books about, anything that has to do with self-sufficiency really. Things like Agriculture, Camping, Survival, and I guess some Construction? And lastly, maybe some things that can help me understand how to maintain equipment. Or well, anything that will have information on machinery that I can use to make my life easier.)

After finishing the little pep talk with myself, I start searching the library for anything of value...

It, didn't take too long to hit a snag though.

(Yeah... I'm, already lost. Even with the books set by genre. I don't know what to look for. I need book names.)

I move back to the table with the textbook and sit on a nearby chair, then pull out my phone. In order to search for some information.

(If the internet is still up, I can use it to do a basic search on the books I might need.

Hmm... Let's start with DIY survival tips. Things like using a magnifying glass to start a fire, sheets to collect water, all that good shit.)

I turn the phone on and check the battery. Thankfully, I still had about half a 'battery' left. More than enough for today. I then browse through the apps in the phone until I found the internet browser, and pressed it.

(If I'm too late, then I'm so screwed.)

After what felt like an eternity, the App finally opens. Without any network error.

(Ohhh. Thank you, internet goddess, for not abandoning humanity yet. Huh, internet goddess. So, Nep Purple heart and Co?)

I quickly start typing for DIY survival methods, and then save whatever pages looked interesting so they can be opened offline. Honestly, you never realize what a treasure trove the internet is, until it's almost gone. I could have spent days looking for information like that on this library alone. And still end up finding nothing. Now I was just a button away from exactly what I was looking for.

(God, I will really miss this ease of access to information...)

After saving several pages of one too many tricks and tips on how to survive in a tropical jungle, brought to us by a bored survivalist that wrote the article, I then wrote down the most important things I found in the textbook. From underground campfires and fishing methods, to how to preserve food without a fridge.

(I don't know how many of these things will come in handy as most of them are for when you are out in the wild. And staying out in the open with nothing to block the corpses, is a good way to kill yourself...)

Now, this is where the library finally comes into play. As some sites had a couple of books as 'bibliography' in the end.

"Fat chance books like these will be here but ehh, won't hurt to look." I turned back to the phone and continued searching.

(Next, ways to generate power and maintenance of machinery. Maybe something about how to install or maintain solar panels. Or perhaps how to create rudimentary wind turbines and how to set up safe electric connections, along with how to maintain them. At the very least, how to replace broken parts and other things that can come in handy. Because even after the H.A.N.E blast, some equipment should still be functional... I hope.

Speaking about it, I should also read about emp blasts, maybe I can find a good way to make the others agree on taking some defensive measures, before the shit hits the fan.)

Thankfully, most of the big sites were still up and running, including the video sharing ones. And there were a LOT of videos about technical stuff. Problem was, once the phone was dead, no more videos...

I then leave the phone next to me, letting the videos play as I started jotting down the information that they were talking about. I was actually mostly 'parroting' what I was hearing, copying it to the textbook without really processing the information...

And once again, I noted down any info on books that were mentioned in the videos, on the same page I had written about the bibliography on the DIY tricks. And, after filling several pages with god knows what, I close the phone and lift my head.

(This, is actually kind of fun. But my hand is starting to complain...)

I get up, and rip the page with all the book info.

(Ok change of pace, let's see what Hogwarts has to say about my findings.)

I glance at the paper in my hands and move towards the bookshelves. And so, the battle for my patience... began. How much time did I spend running up and down the room looking for books that could at least partly resemble what I was looking for? I have no idea. And honestly... I found almost nothing. What I did find, when searching the history section, was some book talking about the recorded EMP blasts. After picking that, along with another couple of books, I decided that I had spent enough time looking at fantasy and romance novels, so I returned to my desk with the books under my arm... Only to find the desk occupied.

(Well, what do we have here?)

A certain pink-haired tsundere was sitting by the desk where I had left my stuff on. She was scribbling something in the textbook while occasionally glancing at my phone. I walked up to the desk and left the books on it. Saya lifted her head and looked at me, with a rather serious expression. More than usual I mean.

"Found anything good?" I ask as I sit down and pick one of the books. She turns her head back to the textbook and lowers the video's sound.

"Figured you would need help with this..." She speaks up.

"Because you're an idiot..." She adds in a lower tone.

(Jee, if I didn't know her any better, I would say she is trying to help me but is too shy to just say it.)

"I appreciate the help." I turn my head back to the book as I hold myself back from chuckling.

And this, is how it went on for a good amount of time. Me reading about explosions, and Saya jolting down information on how to start forest fires with milk and corn-flakes. Nothing, really seemed to change as time went by. Until...

"Do, do you really believe it will become as bad as you said?" Saya spoke up.

I lift my head from the bone dry book and look at Saya. She still had her head down looking at the textbook, though I could see that her hands had stopped moving.

"No, not really." I answer. She then lifts her head, and glares at me.

"Then why did you have to say all that back there. It did not exactly help the group's morale, you know." She keeps glaring at me as she speaks. I sigh and take a deep breath as I lean on the desk.

"While I don't believe that we will return to the stone age per se. I do believe we will need to be able to survive by ourselves, and not by hoping that somebody will do it for us. Especially for free.

As an example, take the refugees that are staying here. They're put under the command of the ones responsible for running this place, and with no survival skills of their own, they are effectively stuck here. And, if the caretaker wants them to do something, they will have to pretty much comply whether they like it or not. So, if we are unable to do anything by ourselves, then this will also become our only option." I focused straight in her eyes as I spoke. Though all she could probably see was a mask staring back at her.

"And Rei is right. Your parents, are working on building this place back up. And so far, they seem to be doing a pretty good job at it. So I don't believe it will get 'that' bad." Saya, narrowed her eyes the moment I mentioned her parents, something telling me she just forgot the question she asked me seconds ago...

(Ughh... shit. Just stepped on a landmine.)

"Ohhh, yes my parents are amazing, they instantly got busy rebuilding the world. While they left their only daughter for dead!" Saya shouted, I could see her hands turning into fists.

"They were so busy helping strangers they didn't care for their own daughter! I was trapped in that school while they were playing heroes! They didn't even try to search for me, their only daughter! Some awesome parents they are!" I take a deep breath, as Saya slams the table with both hands. Her eyes, were starting to get blurry.

(What should I say to her now huh? Just mentioning her parents made her snap. She is not wrong though, and she looks like she is about to cry... uhhh.)

I lower my head slightly as I think.

"I won't tell you that you're wrong. They never 'did' give us a reason why they didn't come for you first. But, there's a bright side to it." I say I lift my head and look back at Saya.

"Huh, a bright side?! What can be bright about this?!" She shouts back at me.

"Well, for one, we have a location that is relatively safe from the walking disasters outside. And, well... had they sent a helicopter to pick you up. I would have never gotten the chance to meet you."

(This, this better not have sounded as cheesy as I think it just did. Oh, who am I kidding, any more cheese and it will start training

cheese rolls...)

The reply was made obvious though, as Saya's face started to slowly take shades of red...

(She's mad. Is she going to shout? She's going to shout... definitely shout.)

Yet, instead, she just lowers her head and starts 'looking' at the notes on the textbook.

"Should you be saying stuff like that to me when you have a date with Saeko in a couple of hours?" She kept staring at the notebook as she spoke.

(Huh, this reaction, was the last thing I expected to see. Did she just overload or something?

And, a date huh? Yeah, if you're a masochist. Considering how she still seemed to be pissed at me when she left, I might better expect some broken bones too.)

I leaned back on the chair as I folded my arms.

"Date? Yeah, no. She's probably going to try whacking me to death." I say as I tilt my head.

(Great, worst possible thing to speak about, especially with Saya.)

"Ohh please. I have seen how you two speak to each other." She says as she shifts her eyes towards the phone.

(What is this? Judge the Naier day? And how 'do' we speak to each other? I have not noticed anything other than the fact that I call her by her first name. I mean, sure it's something. But is it really THAT big of a deal? Uhh... you know what? Fuck it. I ain't gonna play the stuttering schoolboy to this.)

I lean on the desk again as I fold my arms on the desk

"I won't deny it. Saeko is, an 'interesting' person. But... So are you Takagi. You can take this any way you like." I lower my head and bury my nose to the book in front of me, only realizing what I actually just said to her a couple of seconds later.

(Somebody, please bury me alive. The hell did I just say to her!?)

I keep my eyes on the book, looking around the page without really reading anything. And after what felt like an eternity...

"You... this... still... Takagi... Idiot."

I heard her whisper something. I lift my head and look at Saya, who still had her head almost glued to the textbook.

(Did she just say that, or am I hearing things? Eh, fuck it, I'll bite. I mean, I already went this far, might as well sink to the bottom of the ocean now.)

"Maybe, I should start calling you Pink Tornado..."

Saya's shoulders jerked a bit before she lifted her head from the book. I don't think, I ever saw her face being that red before, not even in the anime. I also didn't see, that giant ass book in her hands.

"IDIOT!" Was all I heard as I saw the book flying towards my face. And right before it managed to crash land on my mask.

(H.A.N.E.S? Ohh, nice pick Saya.)

I managed to read the book's cover.

no such thing as over-prepared

(You know. In retrospect, I should have expected for this to happen. I mean, this is Saya we're talking about.)

Thankfully, the mask absorbed most of the impact, as the book crash-landed on my face. After placing the book she just threw at me in front of me, I shook my head and focused my eyes back at face, yeah. Pretty much like looking at a pink-haired tomato.

"Ok ok, I get. No pink tornados. So please, no violence in the library." I say as I lift both hands in a surrendering motion. She just huffs at me before turning her attention back toward the textbook that was in front of her.

"Still. Why must I be the only one with a weird nickname... " I say as I nonchalantly open the book she just threw at me.

"Because you're..."

"An idiot, I know..." I cut her off as I keep looking at the book.

(Talk about a short fuse. The only way to tell her a joke is by posting it online and then sending her the link from a safe distance...)

I tried not to chuckle as I took a look at the book's index. And then, it hit me.

(Posting, videos? Wait a minute.)

"Hey, are there any recent videos uploaded? You know, post-outbreak." I look up from the book towards Saya. She stops writing and turns her attention to the phone.

"Yes, if you go to the main page of the site I'm checking. The latest videos are from a couple of hours ago." She kept writing something in the notebook as she spoke.

(Hmm, I wonder.)

"Did you watch any of them?" I ask. Saya lifts her head and looks at me, her face still with a slight shade of red on it, nothing like the 'tomato' red she had a minute ago though.

"No, we don't have time to waste, remember? You said so yourself." She said as she kept looking at me.

"True, but right now this could be our best, and only chance of finding information on what these things are. Out of all the people in the world, there must be somebody with medical knowledge. That has had the chance to well, find out something, anything about the corpses." I close the book as I speak. Saya just keeps staring at me for a few seconds before finally picking up the phone.

"There are thousands of videos uploaded here, just from the last day alone. How are we going to find something like that without wasting all of our time?" She waves the phone at me as she speaks.

"Easy, just look for the most viewed videos from the last two days with tags that match what we want to find. Things like Virus, Infection, Bacteria, Dissection, Medical. You know, stuff like that." I point my finger at the phone as I lean on the desk.

Saya lets off a sigh before bringing the phone close to her face as she starts typing.

(Why didn't I think of this earlier. Actually, why didn't SHE think of this earlier? Ain't she supposed to be a genius or something?)

And a few minutes later, Saya's eyes go wide.

"Found something?" I ask.

She just passes me the phone without saying anything, I take it and look at the screen. The words 'Scientific explanation for the new unknown pathogen' typed on the search bar. Under it, an unending

number of videos. Most of them looked the same though, recorded by a cellphone in the middle of a street. Except, for the first video in the lineup.

That one was taken inside a laboratory of some sorts. While the uploader's name was, 'ADSGNF'? The video itself had more than three billion views. That was three billion, in two days. I glanced at Saya, who just glanced back at me before looking back at the phone. I then also look towards the screen, and press the play button...

The video opened with the shuffling sounds of a camera being set up. Then, a man in a white lab coat walked into view. He looked like he was in his late fifties, his hair was a medium shade of gray, and he was wearing a pair of thin, round glasses.

" *My name, is Alex Xenogios, I'm a pathologist.* " The person in front of the camera looks around him before turning back to the camera.

" *Me and a group of fellow doctors were inside our workspace when this outbreak started. And now, we have been stuck here for two? three days? Matters not, from what we have been informed, we are not getting rescued. At least, not before we die of starvation, dehydration, or this infection. And as the facility is overrun, and currently working on backup power. Figured I should let people know what we found out before it's too late. And, before any of you get your hopes up, we don't have anything close to a cure. We don't have the necessary personnel or equipment to even try...* " The man raises his head and looks behind him for a few seconds before looking back at the camera.

" *Not anymore...* " He takes a deep breath before grabbing the camera by what I suspect was a tripod and begins walking towards a corpse that was tied up on an operating table. Its torso was cut open, internal organs in full display. It was also missing its right arm. The corpse, upon hearing the doctor, turned its head towards the direction of the camera and started groaning as Alex moved near it.

" Ok, as you can see, the subject is still 'alive', and oblivious to the fact that it's missing its front rib cage and right arm. " He shakily placed the camera on the ground and positioned it so that we have a clear view of the corpse as he spoke.

" So what did we find? For starters, for anybody still wondering, the infected are in fact, dead. This 'thing' right here, is nothing more than a husk that is being controlled by 'something'. A virus? A parasite? Bacteria? We don't know. What we do know, is that whatever it is, it's in the brain. " He walks away from the camera for a few seconds, and upon returning, he brings a lump of meat near the camera. A heart.

" You all know what this is right? But, just to clarify, it's a heart, his heart. " He then points at the corpse.

" Even even after removing the main method the body uses to circulate blood, nothing changed. Because these things don't need blood to 'live'. The moment they get up again, they have no heartbeat, no blood circulation, 'they' are not alive by our normal clinical standards. That is also why they won't stop even if they get their limbs chopped off or are riddled with bullets. Blood loss means nothing to them. We also found that... " The scientist then turns around and grabs something from the small operating table that was set next to the corpse, and then brings it close to the camera.

A syringe. He, then stabs the corpse with it and proceeds to draw blood, until the syringe was full. Pulling the it back, he then shows it to the camera again, as if to show off the blood inside. Then, after taking the needle off he puts the tip of the syringe in his mouth. And empties the contents of the syringe.

(Am I, actually seeing this?)

He winces as he swallows the blood he just drew from a corpse.

" UGHH. It tastes like shit. But, it is not infectious. Blood, is not infectious. Only saliva can spread this 'disease'. Like some sort of

beefed out super rabies. " He starts speaking again, while his expression remains that of a person who just ate a lemon.

" They don't use blood, they are not alive. Yet, they do not decay. No, actually they do decay, but only partially. Their nervous system, for example, still works as if the person never died, if just being a lot clumsier. And their muscles are also still functional, and if any of you noticed, these things are much stronger than the common man. That is because their muscles no longer work under the normal human limits. Limits that are normally placed by our brains to avoid overexertion and damage.

Now, from all the tests we have done. The only thing we could conclude, which is pretty much a speculation mind you, is that whatever has invaded the host's brain, is also nurturing the nervous system and muscles to keep them running. " And as the doctor keeps speaking, the camera's battery sign starts flashing, signaling that it was close to running out.

" Also, cutting a limb after a bite, won't work. Save yourself the trouble and pain. The person you see chained up on the table. We cut his arm off in less than twenty seconds after he got bit, you can see how that ended. And lastly, people that died from other causes, such as gunshots or blood loss do not 'get up' again. Now, there is a chance that this facility is just not contaminated by whatever this is, but then, this could also mean that this disease can't spread by any other means other than an infected bite. " The doctor leaves the syringe back on the table before turning to look back at the camera.

" We were already overrun when we discovered that people that died by other means other than a bite did not get up again. So if, if that is also true for the outside world as well. Then there is a good chance that the virus might be lab-bred. As whatever this is, it has a very inefficient way of transmitting itself. " He closes his eyes and lets out a sigh before shaking his head.

" And for it to spread globally, and this fast. All without the ability to travel by air or water. Even if it did 'hijack' our methods of long-range

transportation like planes and ships to spread itself. It should not have popped up everywhere at the same time as it just did. Add the fact that it's incubation period is just way too fast to be normal. But again, I must emphasize. This is just speculation. There are too many holes that I can use to prove myself wrong for it to be conclusive proof. But still, for it to turn global, so fast... " He then looks at the flashing battery warning sign, before he brings his hand on the camera for a close-up. I could see the bags under his eyes, and the gleam of resignation as he spoke again.

" I don't expect to survive this, but to whoever is left alive, may God be w..." And the video cut off, the camera probably running out of battery...

I, just stayed silent. Looking at the 'replay' sign on the phone.

"Lab, made?" Saya was the first one to speak. I must have been more surprised than I expected to be. As, I could only hear her from my right ear right now.

"We should take that with a grain of salt. As he said, it was only speculation. But, even if it is true, there is nothing we can do about it. Don't let this cloud your judgment and derail you from the task at hand." I speak up as I lift my head and look at an, empty chair?

(Huh...?)

"Ughh. I know, you don't have to tell me. It's just, the idea that all of this is happening because a bunch of idiots decided to fuck up everybody's life..." She speaks up again. And again, her voice comes from my right side.

I turn my head to the right to find Saya's face right next to mine, still looking at the phone.

"OH HOLY F! When did you even..." I shout as I lean my body back. Saya winces and turns to me with a glare.

"Ughh! Don't shout next to my ear idiot! I kept telling you that I can't see the video but you keep ignoring me." She says as she frowns.

"Ohh... sorry. I kinda got sucked in, didn't hear a thing." I respond, she just rolls her eyes with a sigh as she pushes herself away from the desk and walks back to her seat.

"Figured as much. Can I have the phone back now?" She extends her arm as she 'asks'. I just nod and slide it to her.

(Well, That was quite the bomb to drop on my face internet. In the anime and manga, nothing was ever mentioned on how all this started, so I don't know what's going on either. Shame the author died mid-way. I could have had a very big advantage if there was an actual end to the manga with an explanation. Or even just a place that is verified to be a safe haven or something. But as I said to Saya, I need to focus on the task at hand. What's the point of knowing that if I die tomorrow.)

I return my focus to the book about the H.A.N.E.S. After reopening it and reading the index, I turned to the page that had information on E.M.P. range and the damage it can cause...

(So, based on what the book says. A well placed high altitude blast with a standard thermonuclear yield, can pretty much fry a whole country as big as the US. It also mentions that small scale items like phones should normally withstand an emp, also includes most cars in that group. Weird, as in the anime both phones and cars, hell even the gun dots got fried. Actually, that got me wondering. Are solar panels affected?)

I pull out my second phone from my pocket and open it. Then proceed to open the browser and type 'Emp on solar panels'. And after a couple of good hits and a quick read. It pretty much tells me that solar panels are mostly unaffected, but that it would maybe still kill the batteries and such.

(Hmm, nothing too complex to fix if we can find working batteries in a store. I will keep this in mind. The article did also say something about diodes, wiring and something about a controller? I have information on what all that crap is from the notes I jotted down from the other videos, but I got no idea what they are right now.)

I put the phone back in my pocket and continue reading the book.

(Power plants, fried. Telephone lines, fried. Anything hooked up on the main power grid, a larger chance to fry. Also, things that are not on the grid and things that are not powered on have, hypothetically speaking, a higher chance of surviving. So, raiding an electronics store after the blast might not be such a bad idea after all. It does also say that the military probably has emp-proof electronics. Which makes sense. I mean even our humvee is supposed to be emp-proof, even if it is kind of custom made, as I noticed it has ignition keys. Normal military ones do not have keys if I remember correctly.)

"Why are you reading that?" A voice snaps me out of my thoughts, I raise my head to see Saya staring at me.

"Whatdya mean?" I ask, slightly confused.

"I mean exactly what I asked. Why are you reading about E.M.P.s?" She asks as she points at the book with the pen.

"Uhh, good question. I just picked it up after watching that video without thinking. And then one thing leads to another..." I say with a shrug as I close the book.

(I did manage to read what I wanted to know. So it should be fine skipping the rest, for now at least.)

Saya just sighs as she rolls her eyes.

"Sometimes you act like the most irresponsible person on the whole planet..." She then turns her attention back on the textbook.

"Ehh..." With nothing to say I just lean on the desk and I try to see what she was writing about.

"Say, did, anything happen while I was gone?" I ask as I sit back down normally. Saya looks at me and raises an eyebrow.

"Anything? Anything like what?" She asks back.

"If you have to ask me to define 'anything' then I guess nothing did happen..." I pull out the second phone and stare at the browser's text insert box.

(So, while I was gone, the group did not fight? That's good. Means me being here changed something for the better.)

After that, both of us stayed silent for some time. I used the second phone to search for more information on E.M.P. and how to deal with it. Though, everything ended with the same info. Either military-grade stuff or a faraday cage. Both things that are out of my reach.

(Making a faraday cage would make me too conspicuous on why I wanted to make something so specific. Only to then have an emp go off sometime after. And military-grade stuff. Heh, yea good luck with that.)

So, I decided to switch to something different and search for more things you can do without electricity.

(Though, you never know. Maybe after finding Rei's mother and arriving at that school where her dad was, in we won't have to do anything. Maybe we'll get extracted by the army and get sent to a refugee camp or something. Though that would lead to other problems. God, even in the middle of the apocalypse, I still hate being around a lot of people. Talk about a hardcore antisocial.)

Saya sighs as she stops writing, I lift my head and look at her.

"I think. I think we need to leave... " She speaks up as she raises her head.

(Hmm leave? She means the estate? So something DID happen. Maybe that part with the mechanic and Kohta? Or did she actually fight with the group and got manhandled by Takashi. Though the latter would make little to no sense as being the reason to want to leave the estate.)

"You mean leave the library?" I ask as I tilt my head. Saya just frowns.

"No you idiot, I mean the estate..." She lowers her head as she answers.

"Your explanation about staying here when we were in the yard with the rest of the group was actually pretty much head-on. Staying here would put us under the whims of the adults, and they see us like we are just a bunch of useless kids. Deadweight to be carried around..." She kept staring at the textbook as she spoke.

I also lower my head and look at the closed book next to me.

(Well, that is true. But is doing nothing really that bad? I mean, we won't be in constant danger and will have food and maybe even electricity. Though I guess, we will have to deal with a couple of bad apples. And the truth is, we really are 'just kids'. But I say that, Saya will flip out...)

I lift my head to see Saya staring at me, waiting for my reply.

"Well. Leaving, is indeed an option. As long as we can get supplies and a target destination, I don't see why not. But we would need ammo, food, water, fuel. Lots of fuel, you don't know just how much of a gas guzzler the Humvee is. Which is going to be a major problem if we don't have a surplus of fuel." Saya just nods at me as I speak.

"The car is already ours so we should be able to leave with it. I, I could speak to my parents about the supplies... " She averts her eyes from me as she speaks.

(She is not even sure herself if her parents would agree huh. Not surprised, supplies are not something that will come about easily now. And I can't ask for supplies as payment for that crazy-ass mission either, as it was my idea, and Yuriko was obviously against it. I'm gonna turn like those annoyingly forceful window cleaners if I do that. And yeah, no. End of the world or not I am not doing that.)

"We also need to consider the pros and cons of such a decision. Leaving would indeed let us make our own decisions. Along with also being obviously less prone to being overrun because there will be less noise produced by a smaller group. But it will also mean we will have to constantly scavenge for supplies and that we will mostly have to stay on the move." I fold my arms as I lean on my chair.

"With a small group like ours we need to find an already well-fortified place if we want to hunker down. And a place like that. Well, it will most definitely be already occupied. And if not, it will be a prime target for, not so 'friendly' people." Saya just stared at me as I spoke, no snarky comebacks or groans of annoyance.

"On the other hand, staying here. It will probably keep us relatively safe, and give us a steady supply of food, along with electricity. As we don't know if any power plants have already failed after all. But, this decision will also lock us down to staying here. We won't be able to, for example, look for Komuro's and Miyamoto's parents... " Saya looks back to the phone as she nods at me.

"Also, there is something else I need to tell you. This has nothing to do with staying or leaving though. It has to do with you and the group." I say as I get up from the desk. Saya looks back at me with a slight frown, but stays otherwise quiet.

"I understand how you feel about your parents. But you must not snap out in front of Komuro or Miyamoto the same way you did with

me." Saya's frown deepened as I spoke, but still stayed quiet.

"Contrary to my situation, whose family is on the other side of the globe, theirs might be far, but they ain't beyond reach like mine. If you snap at them about your parents, who are here, alive. They will lash out back at you. Because they still don't even know if their own parents are alive or not. And you know. The hardest time, is usually the time you have to spend waiting." I start walking towards the door after I finished speaking. Saya, not saying a word.

(Out of all the times she could act meek, it had to be now?)

After reaching the door. I turn around and look at Saya, who was staring at the phone in silence...

"After all, the only one allowed to piss off everybody in the group is none other than the penguin. Wouldn't you agree, Saya?" I say as I lift my hand and point at myself with my thumb, grin hidden behind my mask. Saya lifts her head and looks at me for a few seconds, before looking away.

"... Idiot..." She lowers her head and stares at the phone again.

"The one and only." I turned around and opened the door, my finger pointed towards the ceiling.

(And I just changed my title to 'clown ninja penguin'. Well, as long as our little tsundere stays out of trouble. Now, what time is it?)

Upon exiting the library, I reach for the second phone in my pocket and find, nothing...

(I forgot it on the desk? Ehh whatever. There should be a clock around here somewhere. Or if not, I am just going to ask some random dude, I get the feeling that Saya will throw another book at my face if I go back inside right now.)

With that, I start to aimlessly wander around the mansion again.

(I also need to figure out what to do with the E.M.P. blast. How can I make Souichiro E.M.P proof the barricades? Right now, they use the forklifts to move the giant concrete blocks or whatever the crap those things are. If they somehow have a barricade open when the blast happens. Yeah, trouble on the horizon.)

I keep thinking with my head slightly lowered as I keep walking down the hallways.

(I wonder where the rest of the group is at. Saeko is probably with Souichiro. And, from the looks of it, she might be getting a new sword. Or, is she at the dojo thinking of various ways to kill me for being late. Hope it's not 1 pm yet. Shizuka is probably on the second floor? I remember she went through a crisis while staying here in the manga. Something about her age and helping people? Or about being a role model? I don't remember. It was something that made her depressed though. Kohta, probably somewhere tweaking his guns. I just hope he stays out of sight from the adults. Lest we have the whole 'gimme your gun' charade. Saya is at the library, unless she has teleportation or fast travel skills. Rei and Takashi are probably in a room or something, doing god knows what. And Alice is. Hell, I don't know, running around with Zeke I suppose?)

I decided to go to the second floor, half hoping to find Saeko on the way to see if she is still pissed at me. Or well, that was what was my initial aim. As after I got to the second floor and started walking around, I spotted our dear airheaded nurse through the windows, leaning against the balcony.

(Huh? The only time I saw her on a balcony in the manga was when she was in the middle of her midlife crisis. Can't have our airhead be depressed now, can we?)

I nod to myself and head towards the room that led to the balcony where Shizuka was at. And after reaching the room, with the door wide open, I walked inside and headed straight to the balcony. As I got closer, I could hear Shizuka sighing. I, uhh, pretty much crept up next to her until I could actually look at her face. Apparently, I really

am a ninja. Because either she just ignored me, or she never realized I was there. Or, it might have been because she was holding a smartphone and was so engrossed in something that she missed me completely.

I lean in, and look at the phone's screen.

(She's reading something off of the internet? Guess she did take my words seriously huh? Then why is she...)

I focus on the written text on the screen...

(Hmmm?... How... to run fast... when... you have... giant... boobs...)

I quickly put my hand in my mouth to hold back myself from laughing. But, eh. You know, mask.

"PPFFFTTTT!" I quickly turn around as I lean on the marble railing and keep my other hand on my mask, to where my mouth would normally be.

Shizuka reacted with a loud 'EEP!'. Probably getting startled by my sudden 'appearance'...

After I calmed myself down, I turned to her. And uh, Shizuka was now holding the phone with both hands as she was leaning over the railing. While she was doing that. She was also bending over, in a rather provocative way. She then turns her head to me and puffs her cheeks.

"Uuuu. You shouldn't sneak up on people like that Serpfiferi! You nearly gave me a heart attack!" She 'glares' at me while still staying in that pose...

"You are going to fall if you stay like that. Also, it's Sepfier. You also do remember that I already told you, you can call me Naier." I say as

I lower my hand and try not to stare... too hard. Shizuka finally pulls herself away from the railing, and turns to me.

"B, but I am a teacher, and you're a student, we mustn't... " She lowers her head with a slight blush, then looks at the phone in her hands as she 'wiggles' slightly.

(No, you are a school nurse. And what does that have to do with my name anyway?)

"Fine, then please, just stop feminizing my already weird surname. Hell, call me ninja penguin if you must, just sto... " And, as Shizuka opened her mouth, I instantly regretted my words.

"Ninja penguin!" She cuts me off with a shout. I stared at her excited face for a few seconds, before letting out a sigh.

(... I regret everything.)

"Uhh. Would you kindly just tell me what time it is?" I ask as I shake my head. Shizuka lifts a finger to her lower lip as she opens her mouth.

"Hmm. OHHH, YES! You must be careful, being late on your first date with a girl is bad manners you know." She says as she looks at her phone with a serious face.

(My brain, it hurts.)

"You know it's, uhh. Forget it. Just, tell me what time it is please." I sigh as I just stop trying.

"Ten past Eleven." Shizuka answers as she lifts her head to me with a wide smile.

"Thanks." I turn around and wave at her as I start walking away.

"Have fun at your date!" She shouts while I had my back turned to her.

(You know, I would normally be enjoying this right now. If I didn't know that Saeko gets her kicks by turning people into mush. Anyway, I got some free time. What should I do?

Hmmm, well I still need a change of clothes. Guess I will pay Yuriko another visit. Though, I don't know if asking her for clothes is the correct thing to do. It feels like I'm asking the CFO of a company what shirt color I should buy. But, I have not seen any maids walking around. So yeah, to Yuriko it is. And then I also need to find out how the barricades work. I could ask Souichiro, but Saeko also might be with him, I shouldn't risk interrupting them. So first, going to Yuriko. Then, a trip to the barricades, to check them out from close by.)

Decision made, I nod to myself and start moving towards the room I last found Yuriko in...

And once there, I knock on the door and speak up.

"Uhh miss Takagi. It's Naier, again." A couple of seconds later...

"Come inside." I heard Yuriko answer from over the door. I then opened the door slightly and looked inside.

"Sorry to bother you, it's actually a lame question but uhhh. Where can I find some clothes? Preferably black. Also, you might want to burn the bed I used. You know, just in case." I look around the room as I speak. Yuriko just looked at me for a couple of seconds.

"Well, I guess it was partly my fault you didn't get the chance to change and clean up yesterday. Hmm, are you going to be occupied after an hour or so? If not, then come back here in an hour. I should have some clothes for you, just tell me what size I should ask for." Yuriko keeps looking at me as she speaks.

(My 'date' with Saeko is still a bit far off so...)

"Uhhh, medium? And sure, I don't think I'll have any problem coming back here in an hour, thank you." I thank Yuriko and close the door, then head down the stairs so I can exit the estate.

(Hmm. So how do I go about asking about the barricade? Should I ask some of the guards roaming about? Fat chance they'll tell me anything though. Hmm...)

A couple of minutes later, I was out of the estate's main building, and started heading towards the main gate. To my luck, I saw a jeep driving away towards said gate as well.

(Jackpot.)

The jeep, after leaving the estate's front gate kept moving forward, until it took a turn to the left about three? Four? Intersections down the road. Exiting the estate myself was no real trouble. Probably because I was also carrying a rifle with me. Though I did get a couple of side glances from the guards.

(Kids with guns huh? Wonder if Souichiro said anything to them. Staring aside, nobody tried to do anything.)

After leaving through the main gate, I kept going forward until I took a turn to the left, at the same intersection the jeep turned to some time ago. And now, I could see a forklift in the distance, closing down a barricade as well as a jeep that was parked in the right corner.

(Bingo~)

I start walking towards the barricade, and upon closing in, I spot the same two guards I met yesterday.

(Are these two stuck in perpetual guard duty or something? No matter, this is good.)

"You two are stuck in guard duty again! Who did you piss off to suffer this fate!" I shout as I keep walking towards the barricade.

The guard that was not driving the forklift turns around, and waves at me.

"OI! Ninja boy!"

After reaching the barricade, I walk up to the guard.

"Naier." I say as I point at myself.

"Nahhh, Ninja boy sounds better." The guard speaks up again as he folds his arms.

"What are you doing here anyway? Off to another secret mission?" The second asks as he gets out of the forklift.

"Yea as if. I already have my group shouting my ear off because of my last 'secret mission'. They will probably tie me up to a pole if I go off on my own again." I say with a shrug.

"You gonna let the girls tie you up to a pole? Damn, you're one kinky dude." The guard next me nods to himself as he speaks.

"At least I'm not stuck in permanent guard duty." I fold my arms and stare at the nodding guard.

"You wish, this is actually much, much better than the alternative. Having to drive out there, surrounded by them ugly bastards. At least all we have to do here is switch between the entry points and open them to let the cars in or out." The guard by the forklift speaks up.

(Hmm? Switching entry points? Interesting...)

"Huh? What do you mean by switching entry points?" I ask as I look at the guard by the forklift.

"Yeah man, I mean. If we used all three exits at once we would get surrounded in a matter of hours. While if we keep rotating the one we open, the source of noise would be switched around, causing all those freaks to constantly move around. It also helps in keeping the

roads relatively clear for the cars to pass. Boss's words" The guard next to me starts explaining.

(So, we have three entrances that are opened in rotation.)

"So what, you move the forklift around every hour when you need to move to the next one? I mean, I have not seen any other forklifts around here." I ask again as I turn my head towards the guard that was next to me.

"Nah, each entry has its own forklift, they are just far apart. If you go back towards the main road leading to the mansion, you will find the next entry point to your left, one intersection after you see the mansion to your right. And if you keep going straight, you will find the third entry point on your left again. The reason you don't see any other forklifts around, is because the entry points can't really be seen from the mansion." The guard next to me points his finger behind me as he talks. I turn around and look at the street that extended straight ahead.

(So, we have three potential ways for the horde can come through. Two things left to find out. Time between rotation and how to manually close the entry point. The forklifts won't be of any use after all.)

"Still, isn't that risky?" I say as I turn back and look at the guard next to me.

"Huh, well everything is risky now." The guard answers.

"No, I mean, from what you're telling me. The only way to manage the barricade is with the forklift. What if it gets busted while the entry point is still open?" I ask as I fold my arms. The guards look at each other, before turning back to face me.

"What are the chances of that happening though? Guess we will just push the forklift up to the hole to block it or something." The guard next to me shrugs.

(Or something? That's all? No plan? Just, or something? Ohh, this is bad. Still, I fail to believe that Souichiro has no backup plan for this. So, last question.)

"So you guys will move to another entry point after some time and keep rotating like that ?" I ask again.

"Yep, we will go to the one in the middle in about an hour, as we've been here for about two hours or so. Why? you're interested in sticking around here and becoming a Ninja Guard boy?" The guard chuckles to his own joke.

"Nahh, just wondering how this whole thing worked. This is, after all, something like our first and also the last line of defense... " I say with a shrug.

"Don't worry, you're safe in here. Safer than being out there at least." The guard by the forklift speaks up.

(Yeah. For now...)

I just nod back at the guard.

"Well, I'd love to stick around, but I got things that need doing. Good luck." I wave at the two guards as I turn around and start walking away.

(So, let's rehearse what I've found out. First, there are three potential 'holes' that lead to the mansion. One here, one straight from here, one after one intersection after the road that leads to the mansion's main gate. And the last one is further off on the same road and to the left again. Each barricade that gets used has its own forklift and they rotate between them every. Hmm, three hours? Shizuka told me it was ten past eleven back in the mansion, and it's been twenty minutes or so since then? So I guess it's about half-past eleven now. They told me they were gonna move in an hour. So that makes it half-past twelve for the next switch, then a switch every three hours.

Now, to the main problem. Do they seriously have no backup plan for manually blocking the barricade other than using the forklift?...

I will have to think of something. I'm not going to leave anything to luck, not this time. Not when the whole estate is at stake. Not when this could be my proof that I can change the way things play out.)

I keep moving past the estate and head straight towards the other entry point. And as the guards mentioned, one intersection straight after I passed the estate and to my left. There, I saw the other entry point with another forklift, as well as another jeep.

(Hmm. The entry points have jeeps parked next to them? I'm pretty sure that this was not the case in the anime. Then again, the only barricade we did see there looked nothing like the ones here. That one was on a narrow downhill road. And while these roads are also one way. They are much wider. To the point that two or three cars could, hypothetically, squeeze side by side. I guess in the anime they were aiming to use a barricade that was not normally used to kick Shido out? Or was it the same barricade they used to let him in? It would explain why a forklift was present there as well. No matter, I'm wasting time thinking about this. Focus on the task at hand.)

I move closer to the barricade and peek inside the jeep.

(The keys are in the ignition? These guys are really lax when it comes down to their cars. First the ones in the powerplant and now here. Hmm, if there is a jeep on the last entry point as well, I will take a guess and say they are there for safety reasons. A fast escape if things go south. Shame that they will probably be useless after the emp. Though, these cars kinda look like Mitsubishi Type 73s. That car was supposed to be pre 2000. So, it might work after the blast? If they didn't add any custom electronic parts post basic production that is. Anyway, one last thing.)

I open the jeep's door, release the handbrake, then try to push it by placing my shoulder in the jeep's door frame. The jeep, albeit a bit slowly, did move forward.

(Hmm, as a last-ditch effort, I could use the jeep to block a hole in the barricade. If things get to that.)

I nod to myself, re-applied the handbrake and close the door. Then turn around and leave. After reaching the first intersection, I turn left, towards the last entry point.

(I should check the last barricade as well, just to make sure.)

As I kept walking down the road I looked at my rifle, which was hanging on my side.

(I also need to get myself a better close-range weapon. The knife is nice and all, but it gets my hand way too close to the face of whoever is trying to bite my fingers off, and I don't think my gloves can save me if I stick my hand in a corpse's mouth. I saw that some of Souichiro's men were walking around with katanas. Wonder if I can get one for myself. Though, I suspect the ones that had a sword with them were high-ranking members, as not all of the guards had swords with them, an example being the lookout duty duo.)

After passing a couple of intersections, a barricade with a forklift appeared to my left again. And just like before, a jeep was parked by the barricade.

(Well, that seals the deal. Time to get out of here.)

I turn around and start my trek back towards the estate.

(I should also return to Yuriko to get my new clothes before my. Uhhh, 'Date' with Saeko. Maybe I should also ask for a full-body riot armor while I'm at it...)

Samurai, i am not

I never realized it while wandering around the mansion. But, I actually forgot my backpack in the room that I uh, passed out in. So, here I am now, walking down a hallway, with a stack of clothes on my hands, barely able to see where I'm going.

(I must look ridiculous right now. At least I still have like thirty minutes before one P.M, so I got some time to return to that room and stuff some of the clothes in the backpack. Actually, I should check for some bigger bags that can fit inside the Humvee as well. Hell knows we are going to need the space if we decide to leave.

Heh. I must admit, when Yuriko said that she would give me some extra clothing so I won't have to run around every time I need to change. I didn't expect half a wardrobe. But hey, everything she gave me is indeed black like I asked, so no complaints from me.)

I also decided to take the chance and change my clothes after taking a quick bath, who knows when I will get another chance after all. So I was actually wearing the new clothes now, new clothes that looked almost exactly the same as the ones I wore before.

Black cargo pants, black shirt and a black hooded jacket along with the usual arm and leg guards.

(Though I also realized something weird about this world, among other things.

I don't smell. And it is not just me either, people in overall, don't smell. Sure, Takashi did stink like a skunk in the Humvee, but he did get peed on by Alice. And as Kohta was sitting next to him, he probably also got shot by friendly fire when the girls smelled them.

Anyway, since coming here and getting 'arrested'. I have been running, sprinting and jumping around non-stop. Overall, doing

things that would normally make me smell like a dumpster. Yet I never did end up smelling anything nasty. The only reason I took a bath now, was because I could, not because I should.

Well whatever, it's still a god sent. Having to take a bath every single day, in order not to smell like ass during a zombie apocalypse. Heh, yeah, good luck with that chump.

I mean, in the anime and manga the main cast did not take that many baths either. Other than the fan service scene in Rika's house, I don't remember them taking another bath. Though they do change clothes a couple of times, so I guess it could be implied that they did?

Still, nobody ever complained that somebody else from the group smelled. But, I should not be surprised, this world does function differently on some fundamental levels after all. A normal shotgun being able to send multiple corpses flying for example. Or that the whole world looks, well, anime-esque? It's kinda hard to explain.

Guess I could also add 'people don't smell' in the list of weird-ass stuff. Now, where is that god damn room. It should be right around...
)

Yet, my thoughts got interrupted by, barking? I turn my head around to see the little mutt we rescued running towards me. Upon closing the distance, Zeke jumps with a bark, and bites down on the bottom hem of my pants, then starts 'pulling'.

I lift my leg and look down at the little dog that was now hanging like some sort of dried furry fish.

(Just, perfect.)

"Zeke! Where did you go! Zeke!" Reacting to the new voice, I look up and see Alice running up the stairs in the distance.

"If you're looking for the furry terminator, he's right here trying to kill me! I think..." I shout. Alice turns around and looks at me.

"Hope you have a way to tame this thing! Before it tears me to shreds..." I say to Alice as I look down pointedly at the dog.

Alice immediately runs over to me and kneels down. She then grabs the dog with both hands and starts pulling him. Needless to say, the dog did not let go.

"UGHHHH come on Zeke! let go!" Alice kept trying. But, despite her best efforts. Zeke seemed to have made his decision.

And well, now I was standing in the middle of the hallway with a stack of clothes on my hands, a dog biting down my pants, with a little girl that was trying to pull that dog away.

(Can this get any better?...)

After trying for a couple of minutes, Alice finally gives up. She then stands up and starts staring at me.

"Well, looks like Zeke here wants to be part of my evil 'take over the world' army." I say with a shrug as I turn around and start walking again. Dragging the dog along with me.

"No! Zeke let him go! Zeke! He is going to make you Evil! Zeke!" I could hear Alice yelling behind me. And uhh, well, I was trying not to giggle. I'm an evil overlord after all...

And so, I spent the next couple of minutes looking for the room I slept in. With Alice 'sneaking' behind me, while I was dragging Zeke along.

(This dog is tenacious, I'll give him that.)

Until finally, something else seemed to draw Alice's attention.

"Big brother!" Alice shouts.

(Big brother? Takashi?)

I tilt my head as I turn to look behind me. Finding Takashi patting Alice on the head. He then turns to look at me.

"Well, if it isn't the valiant knight of rainbows and sunshine." I say while trying to sound as serious as I can. Takashi just stared at me like I'm some sort of idiot. Not that I'm surprised though, judging from what I just said...

"Big brother! He took Zeke and is making him evil!" Alice points at me as she shouts. I lift my leg and let the dog hang in the air once more.

"More like the dog has taken me to be honest. Could you help me out here? I don't want to leave clean clothes on the ground." I say as I look at Takashi. He just keeps looking at me before slightly shaking his head and nodding. He comes up to me, kneels down and takes Zeke with his hands. Then starts poking his ears?

Probably annoyed by all the poking, Zeke turns to bark at Takashi, letting go of my pants in the process. Takashi then takes the dog and gives it to Alice.

"Zeke! Ohh thank god you're safe!" She says as she starts cuddling with the dog, which instantly turns docile.

(Safe? Come on, it's not like I was going to eat him...)

"Thank you big brother." She bows at Takashi, then looks at me for a couple of seconds before running off.

(She really doesn't like me huh...)

Takashi then turns to me.

"Valiant knight of rainbows and sunshine?..." He 'asks'.

"Alice seems to think I am some sort of evil overlord. Seeing how she asked you for help. That makes you the hero, no?" I say as I get a better grip on the clothes.

"Well you're kinda dressed like one. Guns, masks, black clothes and all. Uhh, also, speaking of clothes, you need some help with those?" He asks as he points to the stack of clothes on my hands.

"I'm taking if you're offering." Takashi nods at my answer and takes half of the folded clothes.

"Don't you think this much is a bit overkill though?" He speaks up as I start walking again.

"Saya's mother gave them to me. And you never know what'll happen, I'd rather not end up walking around drenched in corpse blood." I answer. Takashi turns to look at me.

"I see Saya asked you to call her by her first name too huh?... " I just nodded as an answer, not bothering to elaborate.

(Bruh, you have been ignoring her for years. Don't tell me you suddenly started to care about what she does...)

We quietly kept moving down the hallway for some time before Takashi spoke up again.

"A hero huh. I don't think I can really be one... " He kept looking straight as he spoke.

"Why not? The whole group seems to have faith in you. Plus they trust you, that probably means something no? And a hero is somebody who can lead others safely and diffuse conflict without creating more conflict, not somebody who can kick a head off after doing seven flips in the air. Though I suppose it could be an added bonus." I say as I also keep looking straight ahead.

"And, you honestly believe I can do all that?" He asks.

"Better than I can at least. You all seem to know each other for starters, so it makes sense that they rely on you." I say as I turn to him.

"No, not really. I did know Rei and Saya. But Saeko, Kohta and Miss Shizuka. We only met right after the outbreak started." He answers.

"Well it's not like I'm trying to force the title on you. But I already made more than one bad call so far, so I for one, am not the best fit for that role."

(In the anime and Manga they did vote for him to be the leader. Don't know if me being here will change that, but I'm not exactly gunning for that spot anyway. Too much responsibility.)

"And we're here." I say as I turn towards a door to my right, then knock it open with my foot.

The door opens up, and I walk inside. I spot my bag next to the bed to my right, I nod and walk to the bed, then leave the clothes on the nightstand that was next to it. Grabbing the bag, I open it and shove everything I can inside. Then, I turn to Takashi.

"I can take the rest to the Humvee until we find a bigger bag." I point at the clothes that he was holding as I spoke.

"Nahh it's ok, I'll take them there. Might put some in my bag too, they look like they might fit me, and I don't mind the color" I just nod at him as I get up and toss the bag over my shoulder.

"Well I better get going then. If I end up late, Saeko will probably go ballistic on me. Thanks for the help." I say as I walk past him.

"You, sure seem to be close with Saeko." Takashi speaks up, and I stop by the door.

"Close? I wouldn't know, not really something I can tell anyway. I just asked her to help me with training. Guns can only take you so far

before running out of ammo after all. Never mind sounding like a zombie dinner bell every time you pull the trigger." I speak without turning around. And after a short silence, I walked away.

(Why did that make me feel so, uncomfortable?...)

I shake my head and speed up my pace...

Several minutes later, I was inside the dojo. And Saeko was nowhere to be seen. I walk to the center of the room and see two bokkens that were placed on the ground.

"Either I'm too early or I'm too late. The bokkens that are laying in the middle of the room seem to point towards the latter. But, I checked the time before coming here, it was five minutes before twelve. So... " Rather than just waiting around, twiddling my thumbs. I started to prepare myself for the 'torture' ahead.

I take off the belt with the handgun and undo the sling on the assault rifle. Then walk to the side of the dojo and leave the backpack and weapons there, before heading back to the center again.

(Still, how close 'am I' with Saeko? Saya for one, seems to at least acknowledge my existence now, so I guess that's something. Saeko, for all I know, could have been grumpy because she caught Takashi and Rei making out.)

A sudden sound of a door closing knocked me out of my thoughts. Turning around I see Saeko exiting, the bathroom? And she was already dressed in her 'normal' school - skirt uniform. She also had an actual katana strapped on her side.

(Hmm so she did get the blade, earlier than normal too. As in the anime she gets it after the 'Kohta incident'. Which did not happen, yet.)

I look at the blade before turning my sight to Saeko.

"We're using bamboo swords for this, right?" I ask. Hopeful that I can at least reduce the 'damage'...

"No" She replies bluntly...

"We will be using bokkens." She adds as she points to the two wooden blades in the center of the room.

"You mean you will be hitting me with what you used to actually 'kill' corpses? You're still mad at me..." I fold my arms as I speak. Saeko, just smiles.

"I am not mad, not anymore. It's just that I am a bit vexed that you thought it would be better to leave us in the dark rather than sharing your plans with us." She says as she walks up to the bokkens, then picks them up.

"I already told you why I did what I did..." I say to Saeko as she walks up to me.

"And that is why, I am no longer mad." She answers as she gives me one of the bokkens.

"Oh, I see. I really thought you w-OH SHI..!" Was all I managed to say as Saeko instantly swung her wooden blade towards my face the moment I took 'my' bokken.

I reflexively lean backward as I jump away, causing me to almost fall on my ass.

"You said you were not mad!" I shout as I recover my footing, only to see Saeko charging towards me.

"I'm! Not! Mad!" With each word, a swing...

I managed to sidestep to the left to avoid the first vertical slash. Then used the bokken as a shield by putting it vertically to my right to block the second strike. I had to brace my right arm against my wooden blade to avoid it getting knocked out of my hand from the

force of the hit. Then, I did the exact same thing to block my left side as Saeko instantly spun in place and tried to hit me from the left.

The moment I found an opening, I jumped back to gain some breathing room.

"Could have fooled me with the way you are trying to smash my face in!" I shout back.

"We, are training!" I could see Saeko grinning as she charged at me again.

(She's actually enjoying this. Figures...)

She charges at me with another vertical swing that I blocked with my own bokken. And then she swung vertically again, again and again. With each swing, she was becoming more and more aggressive. And each step she took forward, was a step I took backward.

Thankfully, all the extra lessons I took in close armed combat before the outbreak helped me keep my wits about me and not panic. Because, I was obviously getting my ass handed to me right now.

I was just barely managing to block, let alone trying to counter or attack. And it was getting worse by the second. I was progressively being put into a corner, because other than getting more aggressive, she was also getting progressively faster with her swings...

As I was blocking yet another strike, she suddenly took a step back, before instantly taking a bigger step towards me, leaning her body forward as she swung at my right side. Feeling that I won't be able to block this by backing off, I also take a step forward, guarding my side by placing my wooden sword vertically to my right.

Ignoring the impact that just vibrated my whole right arm, I used the momentum to quickly sidestep to the left before turning my body to face Saeko. With several quick steps to the left, I was behind her. Before I could capitalize on the opportunity though, she shifted her

footing, adopting a lowered posture, taking a blind spin-swing aimed to my left, that I hastily blocked with my bokken.

And while still keeping the same lowered posture, she takes another horizontal swing at me, this time aimed towards my right. Which I evaded by taking several steps backward.

(Gahh I don't know how long I can keep this up, my left hand is starting to get numb from all the blocking. For her lithe frame, she hits like a frigging train.)

Saeko, apparently not wanting to let me pick up any distance, puts her left hand on the ground and brings her legs closer to her body before breaking into a sprint.

Though, I must admit, the way she moved. It was beautiful. Like a dance, each of her swings flowed naturally to the next one. Problem was. That beautiful dance was also aiming to break several of my bones. And, worse of all, I was running out of room to retreat.

Honestly, I had already come to terms with the fact that sooner or later I would probably slip-up and get my ass kicked. I was pretty much stuck on the defense from the moment we started, sooner or later I would mess up and it would be game over...

The moment Saeko closed it, She brought her sword next to her face while holding it with one hand, and pointed the tip of the blade towards me.

(A thrust? Ok. Now or never, avoiding a stab should be easier than avoiding a slash. And if I fail to dodge. Well, let's hope I wake up before the nuke blast.)

I steeled my focus and waited as I lowered my center of gravity. The moment Saeko launched her attack, I bent my body to the right. Her wooden sword grazing the left corner of my mask as it passed right next to my head. Not losing the chance, I quickly charged forward and crashed my left shoulder into Saeko.

I landed on her left side, causing her to lose her posture and take a few steps back. Using the opening, I lift my bokken and swing it vertically as hard as I can to her extended arm on my right. Well, not her arm, her sword. Which, with a loud thwack, flew off her hand and fell to the ground with a loud thud.

Undeterred, Saeko grabs me by my left arm and yanks me to my right, causing me to hop a few steps forward before tripping me to the ground. The moment I hit the floor, I roll to my left and spring back to my feet. Saeko, had already taken back her sword and was now staring at me.

"One question. How is this going to help at dealing with corpses? They kinda, you know, suck at swinging things." I say as I bend down slightly and take a few deep breaths.

"Corpses aren't the only thing that we will have to face Naier." Saeko answers back.

"True, but that's why I also have that with me." I say as I point at the rifle and handgun in the corner of the room. Saeko glances at the guns.

"And what if you can't use the guns?" She says as she turns back to me.

"Then I should charge, disarm and beat the crap out of them." I say with a shrug.

"Hmm? Well, then you kind of failed then. Seeing as you didn't 'beat the crap out of' me." Saeko says with a slight smile.

"Well. I can't hit a pretty girl without a really good reason... " I answer. Saeko just, stares at me...

(Too soon? Well I said it now. She might as well just shoot me down so I can stop dreaming.)

After a short silence, Saeko finally speaks up.

"Am I, a woman to you?" She lowers her bokken and relaxes her posture as she keeps staring at me.

(Huh? Didn't she say something like that to Takashi in the anime as well? No wait, this seems different. She's actually asking me?)

"Uhh. Wait, was that a question? Or, Uhh. Yes?" I say as I tilt my head.

Saeko did not answer. She just looked away as she slightly lowered her head. And a few seconds later, she smiles slightly.

"Other than your crazy antics, you rarely show any emotion. And swordsmanship is, it's not exactly a very feminine sport. Add that the mask does not really help in letting me understand what is going through your head." She speaks as she looks back at me.

(You also believe that you're not worthy of positive human emotions. But if you don't start that chat, then it's none of my business.)

I shake my head and let out a dry laugh.

"I guess that's true. But as for your question. I did avoid hitting you didn't I?" I respond as I raise both arms slightly.

(And not because I could not hit you even if I wanted to, really.)

Saeko just giggles as she starts walking towards me.

"I guess, you did." Her slow walk then changes to a dash.

"But you can't win if you don't fight back!" She shouts as she brandishes her wooden blade once again...

(Well, shit...)

For some reason, the only thing that came into my mind at that moment. Was to turn around, and break into a sprint.

"Hey! What are you doing! Stop running away!" I could hear Saeko shout behind me.

"I'm not running away!" I say as I run towards the dojo's wall.

(Definitely running away.)

"Looks like running away to me!" Saeko shouts back at me.

"This, is a tactical retreat!" I shout again.

Using the momentum, I dash straight to the wall and run up a few steps. Turning my head, I see Saeko standing still a few feet away, staring at me.

Before gravity could take hold of me, I put as much strength as I can in my legs and jump off the wall. Straight towards Saeko.

I don't know what she was thinking at that moment. But instead of moving out of the way, she decided to stay in place and try to block me. And you know. Trying to block a human that is flying to your face is usually a bad idea. Saeko, found that the hard way, as I ended up crashing into her and the both of us crashed into the ground.

And, uhh. Ok, I might have not 'really' thought this through. Seeing how I pretty much just mounted Saeko now...

(If somebody enters now, this will look so weird.)

"This, is quite bold of you." Saeko says while looking completely unhurt, raising an eyebrow as she looks at me. Yet, she does not try to shake me off.

Her face was slightly flushed as well. Though, that could be because she was chasing me around.

"I still managed to immobilize you, without actually hitting you. I think..." Saeko just laughs through her nose at my answer.

"Then why did you ask me to train you, when you can obviously fight?" She asks as she keeps staring at me.

"Well, knowing how you fight will make it easier for me to help you out there. I was just kinda nervous back at the truck's roof, so I said whatever came first into my mind."

(I actually just wanted to find a way to spend time with her. But, uhh, I'm obviously not telling her that.)

After that, we just stayed quiet...

"So. You, intend to stay on top of me?" Saeko finally speaks up as she glances around.

"Uhh, right." I get up and take a few small steps back, then extend my hand to help Saeko up. After taking my hand and getting up, she starts dusting herself off before picking her bokken back up.

I reflexively take a few steps back as Saeko turns to me.

"So, you want to see how I fight? Because I have yet to show you all I got." She says as she grins, taking her stance again.

(Wait. We're not done?!)

"Wha, bu..." I didn't even manage to finish before Saeko was dashing towards me once again.

I also realized something. After I jumped off the wall, I dropped my bokken.

(Well, to think after all that, I will die now. Thank you very much, my shitty fucking luck...)

And right before Saeko could get too close and open a can of whoop-ass, the dojo door swung open.

"You two, we have a problem!" I turn to the voice to see Takashi looking at us. And thankfully, our 'duel' got interrupted. Saeko stopping her charge before she could crack my skull open.

(Rainbow knight, to the rescue...)

"What's wrong Takashi?" Saeko speaks up first as she turns to him.

"Kohta's in trouble at the estate's yard!" Takashi answers.

Saeko then turns to me, seemingly waiting for my response.

"You two go ahead. I'll catch up once I get my things." Saeko nods at me and runs to Takashi, while I run to my equipment.

"Alright, Saeko let's go." Takashi turns around and runs off. Saeko then stops by the exit and turns to look at me for a few seconds before running off as well. I think she was, smiling at me?

(Well, that just happened. But, now I got to focus on the problem at hand. The problem? If Kohta is in trouble now, it means only one thing.)

I strap my equipment back on me and sprint out of the dojo.

(The nuke, it's coming today.)

I then ran straight towards the closest exit that led to the yard. The moment I got, out I saw Takashi and Saeko running to my right. I nod to myself and run after them.

And soon. We were there. Kohta kneeling down, hugging our guns, while several adults were surrounding him. All of them being Souichiro's men.

(Hardcore deja-vu right now.)

Also, I noticed that the man himself, Souichiro, was there.

(Hell, even the timing is the same, seeing that I show up along with Takashi.)

The event then unfolded just like in the anime. Takashi stood up for Kohta by labeling him the protector of Souichiro's daughter. Saeko backed Takashi up, and soon, the whole group was there.

(Having everything play out the same way the anime did. Right before the nuke blast. This is not good for my mental health. At least, we won't have any 'Shido surprises'. I at least, made sure of that...)

In the end, I did not have to interfere. Souichiro ordered his men to leave Kohta with his gun shortly after. And once Souichiro and his men left, it was just the group and me staring at each other, while Kohta quietly held the guns like a lifeline.

(Hmm. This is a good time to mention whether we stay or leave.)

"This can turn to be a major problem if they don't change their way of thinking. And sadly, I doubt they will." I say as I look at Souichiro's men while they were walking away.

Kohta then finally gets up while still hugging the guns.

"Thank you guys... " As he speaks, Saya turns to him.

"You need to stop being a fat otaku and stand up for yourself, fatass. You had an actual reason to stand your ground, but you chose to do nothing and take it to the face. Aren't you a man?" Saya glares at Kohta, who just lowers his head with a sad expression.

"Cut him some slack Saya. Him saying what you said to your dad would not have had the same impact. Because there is a big difference between you saying that he protected you and him saying that he protected you. Also, your dad is frigging scary..." I say as I

walk toward Kohta. Saya just turned to me with a frown, but did not say anything back.

"Also, most important of all." I say as I stop next to Kohta.

He lifts his head to look at me while still hugging the guns. And after staring at them for a few seconds, I found my old friend.

"Dibs on the shotgun." I point at the M37 after poking Kohta a couple of times. He looks at me, and then at the gun, then back to me, then nods as he stops bear hugging the guns...

I grab the shotgun and pull it from its sling, then wear it along with the Assault rifle.

"Don't worry buddy, we got your back." I whispered to Kohta so Saya could not hear me. Lest I need her gnawing my face for saying this right after she just chastised Kohta.

"Ok where were we?" I ask as I turn around and face the group.

"Uhh. You really need two guns?" Takashi asks.

"Three." I answer.

"Huh?" He responds blankly...

I then open my jacket and point at the handgun with my free hand. The group just, stares. Except for Kohta, as he was actually eyeing the handgun and rifle now.

"Do you need all that? Won't it cause too much noise when you move around?" Rei speaks up.

"Not if I wear them right. But I indeed won't be running around with three guns. Too much extra weight that I don't need." I answer to Rei.

I was about to speak again, when I noticed that Kohta had crept up 'way' too close to me, staring intensely at the rifle.

(Jeez, he bounced back fast.)

"That is a..."

"Assault rifle." I cut him off as I take off the rifle along with its sling, and give it to him.

"Have fun, might need cleaning though. Stole it from a drooling corpse. Also, it still has a bullet in the chamber." I add casually.

Kohta ignores me and just yanks the Type 89 out of my hand before he starts talking about the gun's history and the use it had in S.A.T. and J.S.D.F...

And a couple of minutes later, after Kohta finally calmed down, I spoke up.

"So, how are we going to deal with this?" I ask as I look at the group.

"This?" Saeko asks back.

"The people in the estate. Just because we avoided trouble this time around, won't mean that there won't be a second time. Next time it might be the refugees poking their noses in our business, and I get the feeling that persuading them ain't gonna work." I look around to see most of the group nodding along, except Shizuka, who seemed to be thinking about something.

"I don't know if you guys spoke about it without me, but this leaves us with two actual choices. Staying or leaving, each with its own downsides." I look at Saya, who nods. She then proceeds to say the same points I discussed with her in the library a couple of hours ago.

The group stayed silent, even after Saya finished speaking, glancing at each other. Waiting for somebody to say the obvious. I turn my

head to Takashi to see him also staring at me. After he realized that I was looking back at him, he nods.

"Who wants to leave then?" Takashi finally asks the billion-dollar question. Yet nobody said a thing.

(Hmm, they are unwilling to take the first step? Gotta make the choice easier. Maybe without having to speak?)

"Let's make this simple. Those who want to leave, raise your hand." I add after Takashi. He nods at me again and raises his arm, followed by Rei. Alice, who was looking at Takashi raises her arm as well.

Kohta meanwhile, was staring at Saya. Shizuka was darting her head around looking at the group. Saya looked at the textbook I gave her before raising her arm, followed by Kohta. And Saeko also raised her arm shortly after.

"Guess that settles it then. And if all of you are going, then I'm obviously not staying here." I say as I raise my arm as well.

Also, ever since the voting began, I've been feeling like something has been pulling my leg, in the literal sense. And upon looking down, I find Zeke biting my pants, again.

"Oh, hello there young cadet." I fold my arms as I look at the dog who seemed to be trying its best to tear off my pant's leg.

"Zeke no!" Alice bolts to me and grabs the dog again. Before she could start pulling him, I kneel down and pry the dog off my pants by putting my gloved finger in its mouth, only to have it bite down on my glove...

"You sure this is a dog? He acts like a goddamn crocodile." I say as I pull my hand away from Zeke's mouth. The dog then just stared at me while wagging his tail.

"I think he likes you." Rei says with a giggle shortly after.

"He's trying to eat me... " I say as I turn to Rei, who just keeps giggling with her hand over her mouth.

"Ughh, can we get back on track now? We need to make a plan, as from the looks of it, other than Miss Shizuka we're all leaving." Saya folds her arms under her chest as she speaks up, Shizuka darting her head wide-eyed towards the pinkette.

"Whaaat, no, no, no! I am coming too! I, just got too focused on looking at you all and forgot to raise my arm... " She shouts, waving her hands around.

"Alright, then we're all leaving. We still need a plan though." Saya adds, ignoring the tantrum next to her.

"Me and Rei will go find our parents, so if we have no plan. We can go towards my mother's workplace, Shintoko 3rd elementary school." Takashi looks at Rei as they nod at each other before turning to us.

"Alright, if it's a long trip though. We will have to go and resupply somewhere in-between, don't think Saya's parents will be able to spare too much for us. Also, if we get to have a say on what we get from here, I say ammo, then fuel." Kohta nods along as I speak. Though I suspect he got sold the moment I said the word 'ammo'.

Takashi puts his hand under his chin and lowers his head.

"But we need food and water too. What's the point of having ammo and fuel if we die of hunger." He lifts his head and looks at me.

"Because we won't be able to find bullets out there. Food, we have a good chance to find some, same as water. Fuel, well gas stations are a perfect spot for an ambush from other, not so friendly survivors." I respond as I fold my arms. Well aware of what happened to Takashi and Rei when they went to that gas station after the 'flying bus' incident.

"Take for example if we were to go to a supermarket. Looted or not, we are bound to find something to eat and drink. Bullets and fuel on the other hand? Fat chance. And speaking of supermarkets, I think that is where we should head first. Is there anything like that on the way to the elementary school?" The moment I finish, Rei speaks up.

"There is a mall that is in the general direction to the school. Although it's not really on a direct path, but not too far away either..." I nod to Rei after she was done speaking.

(Perfect, we need to go there anyway. If I can save the estate, I sure as hell can save one third-person speaking cop. Plus she and Kohta kick it off perfectly-ish. And that guy needs some good news in his life that doesn't consist of heavy firepower. Also, I might be able to change how things play out there, and get rescued with the helicopters that show up later. Though Rei and Takashi would probably insist that we go find their parents first.)

"So, we ask for fuel and ammo from Saya's parents, then head to the mall. After that, we move towards the place that Komuro's mother works at." The group looks at each other before they all nod.

"Also, call me Takashi, Naier." Takashi adds up after me...

"Noted." I answered with a small nod. And as we all came to an agreement, a rolling thunder made the group look at the sky that had now taken a deep shade of gray.

"It's going to rain." Rei looked at the darkening sky as she spoke.

"We should head inside, I'm in no mood to get drenched." Takashi adds right after Rei. And starts moving towards the estate's main building, with us following suit right after...

And as we kept walking, Saya came up next to me.

"Here..." She hands me the two phones I left with her in the library.

"You're done with your research?" I ask as I look at Saya.

"The notebook has only a few pages left." She says casually. I blink several times and look at the book in her hand, before turning back towards her face. The textbook, while not enormous, was not a small one either. It was actually quite on the 'big' side for a textbook to be honest.

"You filled it already? Marked me impressed..." I say as I arch an eyebrow. Saya responds to me with a 'hum' as she turns to look straight ahead with a smug face.

"Of course I filled it, I AM a genius." She adds as she folds her arms with a smug grin.

"So that means we can go back and continue training?" I hear a new voice ask, turning to it I find Saeko looking at me with a smile.

"Uhhh. Right." I answer, dreading the smile that looked way too 'nice'...

"But this time, we are fighting normally. I am not taking 'I can't hit pretty girls' as an excuse." Saeko adds with a grin.

(Ohhh no. She didn't just...)

Aaaaand now I could feel an ice-cold stare on my back. I turn my head slightly to see Saya glaring at me, intensely.

"So you don't hit pretty girls eeh?... " Saya spoke in a low hissing tone while her eyebrow was uhh, twitching.

"Somebody is working fast." Rei, who was walking in front of us, turned around as she spoke. And then proceeded to start giggling. I, just kept my mouth shut and glanced around.

(God damn it Saeko, you doing this on purpose aren't you. And Rei, you should be glad if Saeko decides to stick around me and does not

take Takashi out of your hands. Just saying, because she is more than 'capable' of doing so.)

"Fine you want a fight, you'll get a fight." I say as I turn and stare at Saeko.

"Perfect." Was all she replied with while she kept grinning.

"I'm coming as well." I turn my head to the voice to see Saya, still glaring at me.

"You are?" I ask.

"I need to make sure you won't do anything creepy to Saeko." She replies with a huff.

(This, is definitely going to end badly for me...)

"Hmm that sounds interesting, I actually want to see this as well." Rei speaks up shortly after.

"Yeah! Saeko will defeat you and your evil army!" Alice adds right after. The whole group turning to stare at Alice who was trying to look, Menacing? I think she was trying to glare, though she just looked like a puffed up hamster instead...

"Great, juust, great." Was all I said as I dragged my feet to my coming execution.

And so, we all arrived at the dojo. Once there, the rest of the group moved to the side. After I gave my equipment to Kohta, I moved to the center with Saeko, bokken in hand.

"No running around this time Naier." Saeko says with a small grin. I didn't speak, just stared at her.

(I will have to end this fast. The longer we take, the more excited she will get, and the less hope I have out of getting out of this without a

broken bone. And I don't need her beating on my face while she's getting wet. Especially with everybody here.)

And like that, we started a staring contest. Saeko didn't move, and neither did I...

"Uhhh, are we supposed to count down?" Takashi speaks up, and I turn my head slightly towards him. And the moment I did, Saeko charged at me.

The moment she closed in she slammed her foot to the ground and lifted her bokken over her head, bringing it towards me with a vertical slash. I sidestep to the left while taking a swing at her bokken, causing it to sway to her right. I then grab her arm and yank her toward my back, or her 'forward'.

Having the momentum of her charge, Saeko was forced to take several steps forward to prevent herself from falling. She then again took a blind swing at me as she spun around, missing me by a good the time she turned around fully, I was already running towards her, taking a vertical swing which she easily blocked. But, I didn't stop there.

As I took the swing, I bent my body forward and struck with my knee, right into Saeko's gut.

The purpled haired girl, instead of falling back, takes the hit. She then slaps away my blade with one hand and brings her bokken flat square on my face with the other hand. The wooden blade making a clear sound as it struck me flat in the face.

I jump back and shake my head. I actually felt that even if it was just with one hand that could not even make a full swing. If I was not wearing my mask, I might have had more than a slight blur in my vision right now.

I focus my attention back on the duel, only to see Saeko dashing towards me.

(Focus damnit.)

With Saeko running full sprint towards me, I also started sprinting towards her as well. The moment she got close. She jumped, and I saw her knee coming full force towards my face.

With my momentum, there was no way I could dodge it, so I let my knees give out and lean my body backward, using my right arm to counterbalance my fall. Like a scene straight out of an action movie, I ended up sliding under her, while her knee barely passed over my face.

Also, remember how I mentioned she had changed back to her normal uniform? Did I mention that she was wearing a skirt?

(Purple...)

The moment she was over me I stopped my slide. While still on my knees I turned my body around and ended up crouched down on my feet. With Saeko still having her back turned to me as she just landed from her leap. I then lean forward, and using my right hand to keep myself from falling to the ground, I swing at her legs.

As she had just barely recovered her balance from the jump, the hit caused her to lose the ground from her feet. As she fell though, she did manage to take a swing and land her bokken on the left side of my head. And let me tell you, that shit hurts. A lot.

Ignoring the fact that I felt like my head just got split open, I quickly brought my legs under me. And with a swift motion, I grabbed her right arm, the arm which was holding the bokken, and pulled it until it was completely extended. Also slightly lifting her upper body off the ground. Then with my left hand, I then put my bokken on her neck...

We stayed like that for five seconds, ten seconds. Until Saeko finally lets go of her bokken. With her conceding the match, I let her go and get up...

Or, I tried too. As the moment I got on my feet, I felt like my head just got split in two.

(Ughh, got up too fast.)

"I think you might have done a botched surgery to my head Saeko." I say as I shake my head and put my thumb on the side of my skull, trying to massage the headache away.

"I felt the impact all the way to my shoulder, are you alright?" Saeko asks as she gets up and looks at me.

(At least she is not panting to the fact she bashed my head in so hard.)

I pull my mask and Balaclava off to put some pressure on the part that Saeko landed her bokken on. Then I look at my hand.

(No blood...)

"I'm fine... " I say as I keep looking at my hand. I didn't manage to say anything else though, as I felt a new pair of hands grabbing my head and poking it.

"Huh, wha... "

"Hmm nothing seems broken. But we should put some ice on it just to be safe." I hear Shizuka say from behind me.

(When did she even...)

I turn around and...

"You have a face!?" I hear Alice shout...

I turn my head towards her, to see her all wide-eyed. I just blinked several times before the whole group started laughing.

(Really...?)

I just shook my head before putting my mask and Balaclava back on.

"Still, who won? I mean you disarmed Saeko. But it looks like you took a nastier beating compared to her." Takashi folds his arm as he speaks.

"If that was a real battle. I guess I'd be dead first. Saeko did manage to hit me first." I say as I look at Takashi.

"You managed to disarm and immobilize me first. So I guess you win this time around. Though, I don't know how much of this was a sword fight in the end." Saeko responds with a smile as she speaks.

"I look forward to sparring with you again" She says, then bows slightly. Caught off guard I quickly fix my posture before bowing as well.

"Yeah. But next time, I'll be wearing full riot gear." I say as I lift my upper body. Saeko just laughed through her nose as she brought her hand to her mouth...

And as the group became silent. I could now hear the raindrops hitting against the window, bringing back the truth that only I knew to the forefront of my mind.

(It's really pouring down huh? It's official then. Today, we lose our lights. Let's hope, no, no more hoping. I will make sure of it, even if I have to do it myself. That the lights, are the only thing we lose.)

Lights out

(So, four bullets in the rifle's magazine, two shells in the shotgun, and uhh, three bullets in the p220, along with one eight-round magazine in the backpack. Yeah, I'm in dire need of ammo here.)

I grumbled to myself as I looked at the guns that laid on the same bed I used to sleep on last night. A bed which was definitely, beyond saving now. As I used it as a table for cleaning the guns after taking them apart.

(Hmm, fat chance Souichiro will give me any ammo for the type 89 though, it uses 5.56x45mm NATO rounds, while the ammo we mostly used till now consisted of shotgun shells and 7.62 ×51mm rounds. So, if I can't get more ammo for the type 89 and want to use a rifle, I'll need to either get the Ar-10 or M1-A1 from Kohta or Rei. Or, I can just ask for more shells for the shotgun. Seeing as it's the only weapon I have with me right now that we had ammo for it before arriving here. And honestly, with how powerful the shotgun is, it might just be all I'll really need.)

I take my eyes off the guns and stare at my backpack, the bokken I used against Saeko strapped on its side.

(After I finished my little sparring match against Saeko, I decided to 'borrow' the bokken I used. As the only close-range weapon I have is the combat knife, and I don't want to risk shoving my fingers into the wrong place every time I have to use a close combat weapon...)

I also spent a good one hour trying to get the rifle and handgun back from Kohta, who took it upon himself to personally 'teach' me the history of the rifle before returning it to me. Though, I think he was just buying time before he had to return the guns he was holding...

After that, the group and I, upon deciding to leave the Takagi estate, stayed under some cover and waited for the rain to stop. Or well,

that was the initial aim at least, as we ended up hearing a bunch of refugees shit-talking about Souichiro. And Saya, being her usual self, wanted to go and yell at them for bad-mouthing her dad.

If this all sounds familiar, it's because it is. The whole thing seemed to head straight towards the opening events of the last episode of the anime, which meant the nukes were coming, and soon. So, I decided to split from the group then. Even though I 'did' want to go with Saya, and I get the feeling that the stink-eye she gave me was because I bailed on her when she wanted to go and uhh. Pick a fight, I sadly had other stuff that needed doing.

And so, I first went to check the garage with the Humvee for anything I could use, the only thing I did find though, was two extra shotgun shells. Now, why do people leave shotgun shells lying around? Who knows, I know I don't. Then, I went to grab something to eat, before locking myself in 'my' room.

I also watched a bunch of online videos before actually deciding to check the condition of my guns, which led to the bed's current sorry state, covered with gun grease and gunpowder, among other things...

(Hmm, you know, the Humvee gave me an idea. Why try to use a car that won't even start to temporarily block a barricade and risk getting eaten alive, when I can use a fully functional one?

While there is the risk of losing the Humvee. And I also need to find the keys first. The risk of losing the whole estate outweighs the potential loss of the Humvee by far. Even if I have a soft spot for that car. As for the keys. Well, if they're not with Shizuka, then she'll probably know where they are, I hope.)

I turn my head and look at the phone that was on the bed next to me.

(Ten past Seven P.M. Hmm, based on what the guards said, they should have gone to the 'center' barricade at twelve-thirty, then more to the right one after three hours. Ending their shift at the right

barricade at six-thirty. Meaning, right now they must be at the center one again, or the left one...)

I shake my head and glance outside at the evening sky.

(Anyway, time to move. That Humvee plan sounds solid enough so I will work on it, seeing how this way I can block the barricade even if some corpses manage to get through it before I manage to get there. Pushing a non-functioning jeep would put me in danger of getting chewed up by a corpse if they will be past the opening. Also, even if relatively slow, the Humvee is obviously faster than my running speed.)

I load the magazines back into the guns and strap them on me, then throw the backpack over my shoulder.

(Alright, let's find Shizuka and get myself a Humvee.)

I nod to myself and leave the room...

And uhh, a glaring problem reared up its ugly mug pretty fast...

(Where, exactly is Shizuka at?)

I then started to randomly walk around the hallways, in hopes of running into her, but to no avail.

(Why is it that when you need something, it always disappears?)

I groan under my breath as I keep moving down a hallway...

(Maybe I should check the garage with the Humvee before looking for Shizuka, she might have contracted the 'leave keys near car' disease that everybody seems to be carrying around here.)

I nod to myself as I head towards the building's main exit, hoping to end this search before it can actually begin...

The moment I got out, I noticed that the rain had also stopped. The sky now a deep shade of orange.

(Crap. I'm running out of time.)

I quickened my pace as I moved towards the garage.

(So far, I can think of four ways this can play out.

One, nothing happens. The blast will be during a change in rotation, or the barricades will already be closed when it goes off. Now, seeing how this world keeps trying to stick to the events of the anime and manga, I don't think we'll be this lucky...

Two, a barricade is open but no car crashes into it, leaving a small open hole that can be closed relatively easily.

Three, a car crashes into the barricade. Even with the 'happy funtime' bus missing, and Shido being dead. It can still end with a barricade that has a hole that's too big to cover in time...

And lastly, an open barricade and a crashed car at that barricade. Honestly, if this happens, then I'm going to sue whoever is responsible for me being here after I get eaten alive, along with suing whoever was driving that crashed car.

In any case, let's focus on the Humvee for now.)

And so, a couple of minutes of speed walking later, I was at the garage. The place still empty, like the last time I checked it...

(Guess the mechanic did not need to fix our car as we did not crash this time around. Though it makes me think. Can a Humvee be damaged that badly from a crash like the one from the anime? I mean, even with all the customizations, it's still supposed to be a military-grade vehicle right?)

I walk by the car as I think, letting my hand run along its hood.

(Still, I'll miss this bad boy if we lose it. It's an awesome car to have for a zombie apocalypse. And uhh, I might have linked it a bit with the episode it appears in, you know. Rika's house...)

I then pat the Humvee on the hood.

(Guess I'll have to try and keep you alive as well huh.)

I then move to the driver's seat. Upon opening the door, I sit inside and grab the steering wheel, glancing at the ignition switch to my left...

(No keys, but the doors were unlocked. And, thinking about it, I remember that in the anime, right before they bailed the burning, overrun estate, Shizuka turned on the car with a switch. Meaning, in the anime the car didn't use keys. Weird, then again, in the anime smartphones didn't exist either. Something we obviously have here. Uhh, whatever, focus on important things Naier. Keys, keys.)

I then start looking around in the car, on the off chance that the keys might be inside the car somewhere.

(Glove box, negative.

Next to handbrake, negative.

Visors, the car does not have visors.

Between the seats, negative.

On the seats, negative.

Under the seats, is that a cigar pack?)

After spending a short amount of time looking around...

(Hmm, can't see them anywhere around here.)

I exit the car and go behind it, towards the workbench.

(This is where I found the two shotgun shells, and obviously, no keys.)

I rest my hands on the table and let out a sigh.

(Shizuka it is then.)

I think as I lift my head and look straight at the tool rack on the wall, then freeze. A key, hanging there, right in front of me.

(Uhh, yeah, there's no way. Right?)

I take the key nonetheless and go straight to the Humvee. Get inside, and put the key in the ignition switch. The key slides in without any resistance.

(Okay...)

I then turn the key, and the Humvee roars to life.

(Ohh! I'm a happy panda now, err, penguin.)

I chuckle to myself as I kill the engine and remove the key, then move back to the workbench. And as I was about to put the key back on the wall...

(Better not. Somebody might have the bright idea and try to escape with the only working vehicle after the panic starts.)

I pocket the key with a small nod, and leave the garage...

As I walked back towards the main building of the estate, I looked at the open main gate.

(Ever since Souichiro returned, they have been leaving the gate open for people to move about. That's good for me actually. Less time wasted opening the gate after the bomb goes off. I will just have to be quick about this so they don't close the gate before I can actually drive out of the estate. And well, hope that the Humvee

actually works. You never know how bad your luck is, until it hits you in the face.)

I let out a huge sigh as I looked at my phone.

(Didn't Saeko tell Takashi that men should not sigh? Eh, whatever.)

I close the phone and look towards the sky.

(It's seven-thirty right now, the sky is starting to take on a heavy shade of orange. It's going to happen, soon. But, what are the chances of no nuclear explosion? Hmm, that would require the ship that was responsible for taking care of the nukes to not get overrun. And, I don't think there's anything I can do for that. That ship will probably get overrun, no matter what I do here.)

Upon nearing the main building, I spot my group by the entrance. Shizuka hopping about excitedly. Pulling Alice in for a surprise hug a few seconds later as she kept hopping with a giggling face that I could honestly see from here. And after what seemed to be a small chat, she extended her arm, and yanked Takashi's phone out of his hands. Looking at that, I stopped dead in my tracks...

(This? Oh you gotta be fucking shitting me...)

I slowly took several steps back, and after I made sure that nobody from the group had realized I was there, I quickly turned around and walked away. Breaking into a dead run the moment I lost my line of sight with them.

(Fuck. FUCK. FUCK! Seven-thirty, seven-thirty, which barricade, which barricade. Uhh, central!)

And as I kept running, a blindingly bright light flashed in the sky, lighting up the orange sky like the sun just decided to go back up in there. But, I didn't stop. Instead, I run even faster...

And by the time I arrived at the garage, the sky had already returned to its orange coloring...

I swing the Humvee's door open. Take off the two guns and bag, and throw them on the passenger's seat as I seat myself behind the steering wheel. I shove my hand into my pocket and pull out the key. And as I was about to put it in the ignition, I hit my hand on the steering wheel, making me drop the keys after losing my grip.

"Well, this is a fucking cliché!" I shout as I bend down and grab the key that fell next to the pedals, then shove it in the car's ignition switch.

(Please, please, PLEASE work.)

I turn the key, and feel the whole car shaking as the engine comes alive.

"YES! Yes You beautiful bastard!" I slap the steering wheel with one hand as I stomp on the pedal, wheels screeching as I exit the garage.

(Ok. Focus, focus, calm down. I need to get to the central barricade, pronto. On the way I can check the left barricade from afar. That leaves only the barricade to the right unchecked, but it should not be used right now.)

As I sped down the yard, I could feel that every single person present there was staring at the speeding car.

(I bet my leg that ninety-nine percent of them think I'm trying to flee right now, the rest are probably still wondering why the sky just turned into a temporary Fourth of July.)

I zoomed past the gate and kept driving forward, until I reached the intersection that led to the three barricades. I then turned the car to the right before hitting the brakes, causing it to slightly skid as it

came to a halt. I quickly open the door and lean my upper body outside of the car as I look behind me, towards the 'left' barricade.

(Clear.)

I close the door as I pull my body back to a normal sitting position, and with a roar from the engine, the Humvee starts moving forward again...

(I really wish there was a pause button right now, because I can't seem to be able to calm my fucking self down.)

Upon closing in on the next intersection, I slow down the car and prepare to look to my left.

(If this barricade is also clear, then the right one will be the last one I'll have to check. And then, home free...)

Yet, I got my 'answer' faster than I expected. As I saw a guard appear from the left side of the next intersection, running like a total lunatic.

(Not, good.)

I press on the pedal harder as the guard starts to frantically wave at me. I close in to him, and then speed past him, before pulling the hand brake while turning the car left on the next intersection. And, well...

(Already?!)

Corpses. Lots of them. They had already moved past the barricade and were slowly shambling towards us. Behind them, I could see the barricade, one of its concrete blocks was on the forklift that was next to it. A couple of corpses, were also munching on what seemed to be the remains of the second guard that was still seated on the forklift.

(Why? Why is it that no matter what I do, things seem to always end up like in the anime? Even without Shido here, nothing changed...)

I looked behind at the guard that I passed by, he was just standing there, staring at me. I opened the door slightly, and took a deep breath.

"Why are you still standing there you dumb fuck!? Go warn the estate! NOW!" I slammed the door shut after I was done shouting. The guard, snapping out of whatever trance he was in, nodded multiple times as he quickly turned around and started running again...

I give the running guard one last glance before looking back at the oncoming corpses, then close my eyes and take a deep breath.

(What if no matter what I do, things will always somehow end up playing like in the anime? Having to accept that Saeko will be fucking with Takashi, will be the least of my worries then. Saya fleeing her own burning home with her parents still inside, Kohta breaking down after shooting Asami...)

I open my eyes, and look at the barricade in the distance, gripping the steering wheel as I breathe through my nose.

"No. Fuck that, fuck all of that. I'm either stopping this, right here, right now. Or I'm dying on this goddamn fucking street. " I step on the pedal as I release the handbrake, and start driving straight towards the oncoming corpses. Straight towards the barricade.

"If I have to be a viewing bystander as everything around me falls, then fuck this world, and everything it stands for." I growl as I narrow my eyes, and seconds later, the first corpse collided with the hood of the Humvee, only to be followed by another and then another. And soon, the bumping sound of corpses crushing their skulls against the car's bumper was the only thing I could hear. The only thing I did care for though, was for the car to keep moving forward, to reach that barricade.

Which, it did...

As soon as I could see the opening, I hit on the brakes, causing the Humvee to start skidding as it closed in on the barricade. Being bigger than the hole, the car ends up hitting the corners of the nearby concrete blocks, causing them to slightly slide along with the car, like a two-door gate. The impact also ended up sending me violently forward, making me hit my forehead head against the steering wheel.

"Ughh, second time my mask saves my face from blunt force trauma. This thing really needs some seatbelts... " I groan as I look at my left, only to see a seatbelt swaying slightly, as if it was mocking me...

"Or, I need to stop being blind." I turn my sight towards the front, only to see a sea of corpses ahead of me. My eyes went wide as I darted my head around. Noticing that both front doors were jammed shut between the concrete blocks.

(... Must get a better look, make sure. Don't celebrate just yet.)

While constantly glancing towards the corpses over the barricade, I moved towards the hatch on the car's roof. And the moment I opened it, I was swallowed by the deafening sound of moaning, and growling. I pull myself up on the roof and look around...

Half of the Humvee had moved past the barricade, with the concrete blocks enclosing the Humvee on the sides, effectively blocking the hole in the barricade. Before I could even smile though, I felt the car shaking, and moving slightly backward. I dart my head towards the hood of the car to see an ever-increasing number of corpses pushing against the Humvee...

"OH SHI! HANDBRAKE!"

I duck back down and pretty much jump towards the handbrake, pulling it with both hands. And the car, while still shaking like crazy, finally stops moving. I let out a huge sigh as I lifted my head to look through the windshield.

"There goes another two years of my life..." I grab my guns and bag before going back out the hatch...

Once I was outside again, I looked back at the remaining corpses that were on the inside part of the blockade.

"Well this much noise should cause the corpses that got past the barricade to turn around and head towards me. That should effectively keep the estate safe." I then turn and look at the slowly amassing horde. And, seeing them there, trying to walk up against the Humvee with no success, it hit me...

(I've, actually done it? I managed to close back the barricade. Even with this many corpses in front of the Humvee, they don't seem to be able to get on the hood, they just kept clawing at it, putting no effort to actually get on it)

"We're closed, go home... dipshits." I then turned to look at the corpses that had now started to surround the backside of the Humvee from the 'inside' side.

"And, I just trapped myself, perfect." I peek back inside the car and randomly pick one of the bags that were there, then bring it up on the roof, resting my back against the open hatch door.

"Hmm, black clothes? Did Takashi leave them here?" I ask myself as I open the bag and start poking inside...

As I kept searching, I also found a small carton of, energy bars?

"... confiscated." I open the box as I arch an eyebrow, taking one of the packaged bars from inside before throwing the bag back into the car. I then take off my mask and balaclava, passing them through my arm like an armband. With nothing blocking my face now, I opened the wrapping and took a bite out of the energy bar.

(Did, I really just save the estate? This seemed, too easy. There could be another hole somewhere...)

I shake my head as I take another bite.

(No, don't think like that. Especially now that you are stuck here and can't do jack shit.)

I casually turn my head towards the corpses to my right.

"You hobos want some?" I grab a second bar from the carton and point it towards their extended arms. Obviously getting no reaction from them.

"No? Fine, more for me." I turned my body towards the car's hood one last time, making sure that no corpses had actually managed to climb up, before looking back at the street that led to the estate.

"They're taking an awfully long time getting here. Hope everything's ok at the estate. If I have done all this for nothing then. Ughh, no, just, wait. They'll ge... eahh?" And speaking of the devil, a group of people from the estate just appeared at the intersection. After a short moment of what seemed to be them staring in my direction, they started moving towards me. As they got closer, I could see they were also dressed in full firefighter attire, just like when we first got rescued, they also had the same 'gear' as last time.

(Compressed water guns? Guess they didn't get affected by the emp. No electronics in them? Or maybe they had spares that worked, don't know.)

The moment they got close, they started taking out the corpses that had strayed a bit too far from the mini horde that had gathered by the car's trunk. One person shot them with the pressurized water gun, then another would then decapitate the fallen corpse with a fire ax while it was still shuffling on the ground...

While all that was happening, I stayed on the Humvee, munching on my energy bar as I kept staring at the group that dealt with the corpses. While also looking behind me occasionally, to make sure

that none of the corpses had gone all ninja on me and figured out how to silently climb...

It also didn't take too long until I also noticed Takashi, Saeko, and Rei. No, actually, the whole group was there, including Saya's parents. Takashi and the two girls I just mentioned were just ahead of the rest, helping the members of the adult group.

(So, I guess they managed to persuade the adults to let them help? Or, you know. During times of crisis, morals tend to go flying out the window.)

I also saw Saya awkwardly aiming a gun, before Kohta moved up next to her and started pointing at something. And judging from her facial expression as she turned to Kohta, she didn't look really all that pleased with the intervention...

(Hmm she got the luger?)

As the whole group got closer, the corpses surrounding the back of the car started to turn around and shamble towards the 'rescue' team.

(Well, time to do 'something'.)

I pulled out my handgun aimed at the nearest corpse with one hand, then pulled the trigger. The noise causing the corpses to stop and turn around towards the Humvee again. Only for the firefighters to move in and take out another couple of corpses, making the whole group turn towards them, again.

And then, I shoot at them again. This cycle continued, even after I ran out of ammo and had to reload with the extra magazine I had in my bag. Until finally, the number of the remaining corpses was too small to pose a 'real' threat...

With that over, I holstered my handgun and continued chewing on my energy bar.

By the time we were really done, the sun had already completely set. Meaning it was night, and the estate was not overrun, or up in flames, yet...

After all the corpses had been dealt with, I picked up my stuff while leaving the energy bar carton on the roof, and slid down the trunk of the Humvee. The moment I touched the ground, I saw one of the firefighters giving me a thumbs up, I returned the motion and started walking away while shaking my legs, to get rid of the numbness I got from sitting on the roof for so long.

"You did this?" Saya's father asks as he walks up to me, looking at the Humvee behind me, I turn around and look at it as well.

(I got SO many sarcastic comebacks for this. But uhh, let's not piss off Saya's scary dad now...)

"As you saw, the corpses were already over the barricade, so I focused on plugging the hole before too many of them could actually pass through." I turn to Souichiro as I speak, to see him nod.

"Looks like your quick thinking really did save us this time. Good job, Naier." Souichiro responded, I just nodded at him, slightly wide-eyed by how, nice he acted. Souichiro then turned around to address the firefighters.

"Search every nook and cranny for any infected that might have escaped! And double-check all the barricades! Letting even one of them escape is not an option!" He shouts at the adults.

(Aaand, he's back.)

The men in the suits responded by spreading out and beginning the search, looking at the houses around the barricade...

"I will return to the estate, we might have lost all of our electrical equipment, but we still need to figure out what to do with, that." He

points at the sea of corpses that was making a racket on the other side of the barricade.

With his points delivered, he walked away as the rest of my group came up to me, including Saya's mother.

"You have a knack for doing things that nobody agrees on, don't you?" Yuriko speaks up with a rather soft tone.

"He has a knack for being a huge frigging idiot!" Saya loudly butts in as she leans towards my face with puffed cheeks before I could even reply.

"If you're going to say that I acted on my own again. I'm going to say that you all just acted way too slow instead." I say as I point the unfinished energy bar in my hand towards Saya's face. She stares at the bar for a couple of seconds before huffing and looking away, as the per usual tsundere reaction.

"Yet, the fact still stands. As my husband said, your quick actions saved us from a very bad situation. But still, how did you know?" Yuriko puts her hand under her chin in a thinking pose as she looks at me.

"That the barricade might fail?" I ask as I take my mask and balaclava out of my hand and wear them, Yuriko nods.

"I noticed that the forklifts were the only thing that can be used to open and close the barricades, with nothing else being capable of moving the concrete blocks. After the emp blast, I figured that there's a chance that the forklift might get busted while it was moving a block. Paranoid as it might sound now that I'm saying it out loud. It sadly seemed to be exactly what happened." I turned to look at the forklift that still had the remains of the unlucky guard on it.

(The two guards on the barricade duty today, they were the ones I spoke with several times during my stay here, weren't they? So that

person is. Uhh, I don't know, he ever told me his name. Rest in peace, this is all I can offer you now.)

"We should head back. Mister Suoichiro is right, we're not out of the woods yet." I turned my head to glance at the group before I started walking away.

(The horde might not be in the estate's perimeter, but it's still way too close for comfort, we need to get rid of it before I can give the world and its knack for following the anime the middle finger. And, I do have an idea. Seeing how Souichiro seems to acknowledge that I managed to stop this, even if only temporarily. Hmm, yeah, that could work.)

I nod to myself and pick up the pace as I walk back toward the estate...

Upon reaching the main gate I turn around and wait for the rest of the group to gather.

"You all got a minute? I think I might have a plan on how to deal with this horde that's camping outside." The group looks at each other, then turns to me.

"And it includes all of us this time?" Saeko 'asks'. I just chuckled at her question.

"Yes, it includes all of us, because it also includes us leaving the estate." I say as I fold my arms. The group looked slightly surprised by my answer, but they quickly refocused on me as they nodded.

"It's actually pretty simple, we are going to use the Humvee to lure away the horde." I add casually.

"UHH, you want me to tell you that you are an idiot now, or after you explain to us how this is even going to work." Saya replies as she raises an eyebrow, frowning slightly in the process.

"When I was at the powerplant, your father used dynamites to lure away a horde, we can do the same here. Both to clear a way for the Humvee to drive through, and to get the horde to follow us as we drive off." I replied to Saya.

"Wait, they have explosives here?" Kohta asks right after, I turn my head to Kohta and answer with a nod.

(There is also a second part to my plan, but I'll keep that to myself for now.)

Seeing as we were short on time, and we were planning on leaving the estate anyway, the group agreed to my plan as they could not think of anything better. So, we moved inside, towards the estate's main yard, where Souichiro was talking with several other men.

And as we got close, I could make out one of Souichirou's men talking with him.

"We need to get the infected to move away from the barricade as quickly as possible. We don't even know if that car can hold up against so many of them pushing against it for too long. What if they breakthrough?" One of the men in white uniform says as he keeps looking at Saya's dad.

"I know, we'll have to reinforce the barricade. And not just the one that was breached. With the forklifts out of order we need to take countermeasures until we find replacement parts to make them functional again." Souichiro replies.

"I think we can help with that." I speak up as I move towards the men. Who, other than Souichiro, who kept a serious face. Turned to look at me with a 'funny' look.

"What do you have in mind Naier?" To their surprise though, Souichiro motioned for me to continue.

"Dynamite." I answer flatly. Souichiro just raises an eyebrow as he keeps looking at me.

"I know you have dynamites here, you used them in the power plant after all. We'll simply do the exact same thing here. The Humvee can still run, so we'll use it to drive the horde away. It will give you time to seal the hole after the car is no longer there and hopefully lure most of the horde away from the estate." As I finish explaining my plan, Souichiro nods.

"Hmm, it sounds solid, but who would drive the Humvee? You understand that the one driving might not be able to return." He asks.

"We will." I answer as I point at the group behind me with my thumb. And one of Souichiro's men, probably not being able to hold himself anymore, decided to air out some oh so original lines.

"What? Sir!? You cannot expect a bunch of kids to do this!? There is no way..."

"Excuse me?" I interrupted the man before he could rattle on.

"Sorry but, correct me if I'm wrong. But while you got caught trying to pull your pants up, I was out there. Doing your job, by plugging a goddamn hole you 'adults' opened, and then failed to close." I fold my arms and lean slightly forward as I speak.

"We were..."

"Enough." Souichiro spoke up, causing the man to pipe down.

"If you want to do this, I won't stop you. Just know that you will have at maximum two days to return here. We'll be leaving the estate for a more favorable position, now that the barricades are compromised. If you're not back by then, all of you will be left behind." He glanced at the group behind me as he spoke.

"We'll also need supplies." I add, and Souichiro turns to look at me again. And, he was not the only one I could feel staring at me right now.

"We'll be looking for Takashi's and Miyamoto's parents, so there's a chance we might not make it back in time before you evacuate. We would like some extra dynamite, ammo for the guns we use, and fuel for the Humvee." As I finish speaking, one of Souichirou's men speaks up again, wonder if it was the same dude as before...

"Why you little. Who do you think you're... "

"Payment." I cut him off, causing Souichiro to fold his arms as he kept looking at me.

"For saving the estate, twice." I add as I also fold my arms. Souichiro, just stared at me. And he kept staring, for a good two minutes or so...

Until, he finally nodded.

"You will take as much as you can fit in the Humvee. You can decide what you want to take. The horde outside won't wait for us to get ready, so we'll begin as soon as you're finished. Don't dawdle." Saying that, he turns to walk away, the men following behind him...

I waited a bit for Souichirou and his men to enter the estate. Then...

"Ughh. Not gonna lie, didn't think it would get 'that' intense." I dropped my hands to my knees as I took a deep breath, then looked back at the group.

"So, we stick with ammo and fuel?" I ask as I lift my head.

The group just kept staring at me, before they all started nodding slightly.

"Ummm, how are we even going to get everything to the jeep? Nevermind actually using it, isn't it stuck in the barricade?" Kohta

asks. I turn to look at the chubby guy with a smirk that he could obviously not see because of my mask.

"Why, we do your favorite thing of course. We walk. A lot. Multiple trips, carrying the stuff from here, to there." I say as I point towards the general direction of the Humvee. Kohta's eyes going wide as I speak.

"You're, joking right... right?" He asks with dread, imagining just how far and how heavy the things he would be carrying over and over again will be.

"Nope. And the faster we start, the faster we finish. And I know I said ammo and fuel only, but as we have Saya's father's permission, we should also take some food and water. So, let's get to it ya?" The group nods at me before they all start heading towards their own destination. Some, with a bit less, 'enthusiasm', compared to the others...

(... Jeez Kohta, now you're making me feel bad...)

"Hey Kohta." I called out to dejected-looking guntaku while he was pretty much dragging himself on the floor. Probably trying to follow where Saya was going. He turns to me while still keeping the same defeated posture.

"You know all the new guns we got right?" I ask, he just nods back.

"Alright, you're the only one who can do this, so decide what ammo is better to take with us and at what quantity. Oh, except from shotgun shells. We are taking a mountain of them no matter what. Because shotguns. Once you're finished, ask whoever is in the 'armory', or whatever place they keep the ammo here, to set up what we need. I'll come to help you carry it once I get the chance." Kohta, probably preferring this over carrying water bottles, immediately straightens his posture and brings his hand under his chin. After thinking for a short time, he gives me a thumbs up.

"Consider it done boss." He then turns around and walks away at a quick pace.

(Boss? Eh, whatever. So, what should I be doing now? Kohta can definitely handle the ammo acquisition. So, either fuel or food, guess we could also do with some extra clothes? I mean, all we got is that mass of black stuff. Though, I guess the mall will have a lot of clothes that the group can pick. Hmm, guess I'll head out to the garage to get the fuel.)

With that, I start heading towards the garage. Hopefully, I could find somebody to direct me to where they kept the fuel from there. Or well, that was where I was going initially, before spotting Shizuka, not five minutes later. 'Lifting' two big crates. She was pretty much walking blindly as the boxes covered her face, and looking from how strained she seemed to be? She would probably not make it more than ten meters before falling flat, or dropping the boxes.

I shake my head and run up to her. And once I was next to her, I poked her arm.

"Give me one of these before you end up tripping over something." I say as Shizuka turns her eyes to look at me, keeping her face pointed forward.

"Umm, ehehe. I think, I got a little, more... than I can handle." She responds as she closes her eyes. Making an awkward smile that proved that she obviously regretted her decision...

(This ain't a challenge you dumbo.)

"Yea..." I say as I grab the top box and take it from her.

"... Thank you." She finally starts speaking normally as she corrects her posture.

"What's in here anyway?" I ask as I get a better grip on the box.

"Food and water." She replied. And with that, we started walking towards the Humvee...

And, uhh. It, didn't take 'too' long for Shizuka to start chatting, probably bored from all the silence.

"Why do you keep wearing that mask."

"I like it."

"Why do you keep wearing black."

"I like it."

"Where did you learn to drive?"

"I li, errr, I had some driving lessons with my father when I was younger, I guess they stuck with me."

"Ohh, Sorry, I didn't mean to..." I turn my head to her as I raise an eyebrow, slightly confused at Shizuka's strange response. Only to understand what she was sorry about a second later.

(Right my 'father' is supposed to be on the other side of the globe.)

"Don't be. I might be away from my parents, but compared to a lot of people, I was actually really lucky. Because I was able to find you all. Trust me, it could all have been much worse, so don't let it drag you down." I say as I turn to look at the street ahead.

Shizuka didn't reply. And after a couple of seconds of silence, I turn to look at her again, only to find her staring at me slack-jawed.

"What? Don't tell me you thought that I wasn't grateful for being here?" I ask. Shizuka shakes her head as she smiles.

"No, it's just that, it is something else hearing you say it." I just laughed through my nose as I also shook my head...

Upon arriving at the barricade, I found Saeko, Takashi and Rei by the Humvee. Several fuel canisters next to the car's trunk.

"Looks like we will be taking some food with us after all." Reacting to my voice, the three turn around to face me.

"Two boxes? That should last us for quite some time actually." Rei speaks up first.

"Ummm, one is actually filled with water bottles, the other one is rations and canned food." Shizuka replies.

"Well, I think we have enough fuel and food then. Remember, we still need a good amount of space for the ammo and dynamite." I say after Shizuka as I leave the box in the car, then look at the canisters filled with fuel.

"Saya went to get the dynamite from her dad. About the ammo, I don't know." Saeko replied.

"I sent Kohta to deal with it. So, we split into two groups now? One to help Saya with the explosives and the other to help Kohta with the bullets. I already said to Kohta that I will be helping him, so I'm going for the bullets." I fold my hands as I add right after Saeko.

(Sorry Saya, but I ain't backstabbing Kohta by bailing on him. Even though, it's really tempting. No, no, no bad Naier, bad. Never backstab a bro, never.)

"Hmm, I'll go help Saya then." Takashi nods as he speaks.

"I will go with Takashi." Rei adds right after,

(I would be surprised if you actually didn't go with him to be honest...)

"Ummm, where should I go?" Shizuka asks.

"Go get Alice." I answer. And the rest of the group turns to look at me like I just spoke in a different language.

"... what?" I ask as I glance around me.

"Are you sure we should take a little girl with us? She'll be safer here." Takashi scratches his head as he speaks, the rest nodding slightly.

(True...)

"But what about her mental state?" I answered, and the rest of the group looked even more weirded out by my answer.

(Really? Damn, sometimes they're denser than densium bricks.)

I let out a silent sigh.

"All of you never wondered why Alice is still her cheery self when her dad died What. Two? Three days ago?" I ask, they all just looked at each other before turning to stare back at me.

"You." I point at Takashi.

"Me?" Takashi points at himself as he tilts his head.

"Yes you, you dork. The moment her father died, you were there to keep her safe when everybody else was leaving her behind. Effectively placing yourself as a father figure in her mind. Of course she knows that you are not her real father, but she sees you as a source of protection and care. So you tell me, how will she feel if you decide to leave her behind as well. You really think she'll be able to handle getting abandoned by two people she trusted her life with in rapid succession? And I know you are not 'abandoning' her, but in her eyes, it won't make a difference, you're going to leave, and leave her behind." I respond as I keep looking at our 'leader'. And now, they were all looking at me like a bunch of fish, even Saeko was doing the 'fish' stare...

(Really? Is it that surprising? Who the hell do they think I am? Fucking Hanibal?)

"Wow. First saying that you feel really lucky to have had the chance to meet us, and now this. You really are a nice person." Shizuka claps her hands together as she smiles.

(And of course. Shizuka would go and spill whatever embarrassing thing I might have said to her to all the wrong people. Fucking... ughhh.)

I darted my head to her for a few seconds before turning my back to the group.

"We're still standing next to a giant horde, let's get going." I said hurriedly as I started walking away. And I swear, I could hear giggling behind me.

(Note to self. Never, EVER say embarrassing things when Shizuka can hear me. Hahh, it sounds so, obvious now that I said it to myself...)

As I kept moving, I heard a voice coming from behind me.

"Well, you're the last person I expected to see running away from something." Turning to the voice, I see Saeko walking up to me.

"I didn't run away from anything..." I say as I turn my head back towards the street ahead. Glancing back at her after a few seconds, only to see her staring at me with an 'oh yeah?' expression.

"Uhh, fine. I'm just, not good with all that diabetes-inducing stuff." I say as I turn to her, raising both arms slightly. She just smiled as she covered her mouth with her hand.

"Yes, I kind of figured that." She says as she looks at me with a fond expression on her face. After that, we kept walking in silence for a

short while. It also not long after, when Saeko started speaking again. Though this time, her tone felt rather, somber.

"Lucky. Don't take this the wrong way, I am really glad that you consider yourself lucky because you met us. But, should you really trust people you just met this easily? Some people, they might not be what they appear to be..." Saeko kept her head slightly turned away from me as she spoke.

(Wait, is she? Uhh, shit. Hmm. ok, how do I go about this?)

"I don't trust people easily. But you all have effectively saved my life more than once. Being it by watching my back out there, or just by letting me stay around. And well, name me one person who doesn't have a skeleton in their closet." I say as I turn my head to her.

"You?" She answers as she also turns to look at me.

"Pfft!" I nearly choked as I tried to hold myself from actually laughing at her answer, seeing that she actually seemed at least 'partly' serious.

(She's pulling my leg, right? Let's see. Stealing cash, lying through my teeth about god knows how many things to everybody in the group, killing living humans without getting even slightly shaken, wanting to date both Saeko and Saya. And the list goes on...)

I lower my head before shaking it slightly, then look back at her.

"Saeko. Just look at me." I say as I lift both arms.

"My looks alone should say 'I am fucked up secrets incarnate'." I answered, Saeko tilting her head as she kept staring at me.

"Secrets, like what?" She asked. I just, snickered at her question.

"Now, you don't actually expect me to just up and tell you, do you? Not when you have not shared anything about yourself with me."

Saeko just blinked blankly at me before looking back towards the street.

"True." She says before slightly lowering her head again.

"But, you should really be careful what you wish for..." Her voice was so weak now, that I think she didn't actually intend for me to hear what she just said. But well, I always had good hearing, so yea...

"I understand that there are things that you don't want to talk about with just anyone. There's a reason they're called secrets after all. But, just so you know. I'm here if you need me. After all, you're the one who kept telling me not to go off and do everything on my own" I respond as I keep looking ahead...

Only to dart my head to her a few seconds later.

"Ok, forget I just said that. Way too cheesy..." I add as I shake my head, Saeko just giggled.

"A man must never go back on his word Naier." She says as she turns to look at me with a slight smile.

"Well. My offer still stands. Just, uhh, forget the way I mentioned it?" I answered back. Saeko just closed her eyes and laughed lightly through her nose. Before turning to look at the street ahead of us.

"If I ever feel the need. Then, I might count on your offer." She responded with a calm tone as she kept looking ahead.

I just nodded as we continued walking towards the estate.

(I won't lie, if her opening up to me means us getting closer, then I'm all in for it. But there's also another point of why I'm needling her about secrets. And that is, to stop her from bottling up her emotions to the point of bursting. If I can make her accept herself or at least make her believe that somebody accepts her for who she 'really' is, it

will keep her stable. And even if it won't make us closer, it's still as important.)

I then glanced at Saeko, who was calmly walking next to me.

(Because, jokes aside, if she does go berserk. I don't think I'll be able to stop her.)

Departure

Well, gotta thank the moon that I'm still able to see where I'm going, what with the lights being dead and all. But, to be totally honest, I would rather be walking blind right now...

After my little chat with Saeko, things have been 'a bit' awkward. Even though I and Saeko were walking right next to each other, neither of us had said a thing. Not out loud at least...

(I'm here if you need me? When the fuck did I even. Ughhh, I must be stupid. Nahh scratch that, I am stupid, not to mention that I've probably just triggered every single death flag in existence. But hey, it could have been much worse. At least she didn't respond with a 'Don't worry I have Komuro' or something like that..

Yep, definitely could have been much worse...

Huh, here I am, preparing to dive headfirst into a giant ass horde, and what keeps replaying in my head is the chat I had with Saeko a couple of minutes ago. Priorities still anything but straight I see, ey self?)

As we arrived at the estate's front gate, I saw the yard illuminated by the same liquid candles that Souichiro's men used in the anime.

(Hopefully, they ain't gonna start a forest fire this time around.)

"So, where do we go from here?" Saeko asks after we stopped by the estate's entrance.

"They must keep all the firepower around here, somewhere. Sooo, maybe an armory? I got no idea where it might be though. Hmmm, give me a second" I say. as I turn away from her, and walk up to the guard that was standing next to the front gate.

"Excuse me! Does the estate have an armory or a building used to store ammo inside? A friend of mine should be there, waiting for us with an, uh, order." The guard turns to look at me, and grins?

"We got no armory. But we do have a warehouse with most of our ammo and guns inside. Keep walking straight and you will see it, it's the only building that isn't connected to the main house. It's straight and slightly to the left from here." He points behind him, though the metal bars of the open main gate...

After the guard was done speaking I turned around to return to Saeko, only to see her standing right behind me. Before I could speak, she nodded at me, it seemed she heard the guard as well.

I turn to the guard again and nod to him as well...

And the moment we passed the gates

"Oh, and good luck!" The guard shouted. I turned to the guy without stopping, only to see him trying to hold himself off from laughing, as he slightly hunched his head forward. All the while, keeping one hand over his mouth.

(I have a bad feeling about this.)

After that, it did not take too long for us to find the building that the guard mentioned, and found out 'why' he found the whole situation so, funny.

As we got nearer, I could see Kohta waving at us energetically. A giant pile of multi-colored wooden crates next to him, stacked up in the form of a pyramid.

(You gotta be kidding me...)

And I do mean GIANT. I could easily fit inside the pyramid along with two or three more people if the insides of the pile were hollow.

(Why did I leave our resident gun nut unsupervised in an ammo warehouse again? And how the hell did he even manage to stack the boxes like that?)

We didn't even manage to get close before our gun opened his mouth...

"Hey so, what are we going to move first Naier? The shotgun shells you asked for are in the red boxes. We also have slugs but the crates are the same color as the normal buckshot so I don't know exactly which box has what. What I do know is that we have five crates of buckshot and two crates of slugs, we can start with them if you want. Though I do recommend that we start with the 7.62 mm's in the green boxes, or maybe you want to get the 5.56mm's first? They are in the green boxes that have a darker shade of green. We have only one gun that uses that type of ammo, so I took only four crates. The orange ones have all types of handgun ammo, though only the more common calibers, but have at least two boxes filled with 9 x 19mm parabellum rounds. The blue ones have 50 bmg rounds." Kohta was practically drooling as he barraged us with words...

"Kohta, we don't have..."

"Oh right! And the yellow ones have rockets, I almost forgot." He cuts me off.

(Rockets? Seriously? Souichiro has, rockets? How the hell did he, uhh, forget it. Not the time for that...)

"Kohta, just for the sake of demonstration. In relative size, describe to me how big the Humvee is." I say as I stare at the piles of crates.

"Ohh no worries, we can just tie them up outside of the car, I have it all calculated. No need to worry." Kohta raises one hand in a 'it's all cool' motion.

(Ok, letting Kohta do anything relating to guns without supervision, was a definitely bad idea.)

"Kohta we're not going to tie anything on the outside of the car, be it crates, or people. Also, three crates of 5.56?"

"Four" Saeko corrects me...

"How many bullets can a crate fit in anyway?" I ask right after Saeko.

Kohta puts his hand under his chin, seemingly to think...

"As these are the old type of wooden boxes, I would say. Hmmm, about one thousand two hundred rounds if they're full? They are bigger than the normal metal ammo boxes and those usually can hold up to about eight hundred rounds of 5.56 if I remember correctly." Kohta nods as he finishes speaking. I, just tilt my head slightly...

"So, you're telling me. You want to take about four thousand eight hundred bullets with us. For one, weapon..." I just kept staring at Kohta as I folded my arms...

"Hmm. Yea, you're right." Kohta nods, seemingly agreeing with me on just how ridiculous he's being. I was about to take a breath of relief, when he continued...

"Might not be enough." And I ended up choking instead.

"Ghhh. N... no stap, Kohta just, ughh." I take a deep breath as I clear my throat.

"Three boxes." I say as I look at him.

"Hmm, are you sure? I mean, you're a relatively good shot. As long as you fire on semi-auto, then I guess three of each is..."

"No Kohta, we are taking three boxes, in total. Everything to a total of three." Kohta looked at me like I just said a bad joke, until he

realized. I was not joking.

"What! You can't be serious! We'll run out of ammo in no time!" He shouts back at me.

"We're not aiming to start a war here Kohta. Rockets? 50 cal's? Where are we even going to find weapons that use that kind of firepower?" I respond as I raise my arms slightly.

"But, we need to be prepared! You never know, we might find some weapons, out... there... " Judging by how he stopped shouting and looked towards the ground in the middle of his sentence, I guess even he knew how ridiculous that sounded.

(Where's 'boss man' when you need him. Uhh, then again, Kohta might have been able to actually convince Takashi that we need to take the whole armory with us. So better if I take care of this.)

"Uh, we will take. One box of handgun ammo, one box of rifle ammo, and one box of shotgun ammo. The handgun ammo box will be for the 9×19mm Parabellum bullets, as we have two guns that use that. The only gun we have that uses another type of handgun caliber is the Smith & Wesson M37, which uses .38 caliber ammo. So we either leave that gun with whatever bullets it still has inside, or see if we can change it for another p220 that uses 9x19mm's. That's..."

Before I could finish, a man in a white tank top that had several black stains on it, along with overalls that he was wearing like normal pants, came up to us. While not as bad as his shirt, his face also had several black stains on it. Other than that, he was shaved and his hair was tied up to a small bun on the back of his head.

"I can do exactly that if you want. We have several p220's in the warehouse, and I don't see the trouble trading you one for the M37, as we have ammo for that one as well." The man spoke as he cleaned his hands with a rag, before stuffing the rag into his back pocket. I just nodded at the man, agreeing to the trade. And then, I looked back at Kohta. He just sighed as he let his shoulders drop.

"Just, let me go get it." He says with a dejected tone as he starts dragging his feet towards the armory...

"It's alright, once you're ready to pick all your weapons for good I'll have it there with the rest for ya." The man in the tank top turns to Kohta as he speaks.

I just looked at him while tilting my head. The man then turned to me, and upon noticing that I was looking at him with my head being almost sideways, he chuckled.

"Your friend brought a couple of guns here some time ago. Figured he was going to give them to me to put them in the warehouse, but he instead asked me for several cleaning kits along with all these boxes you see here." The man turns to Kohta once again.

"I have to admit, after seeing him work, your friend over here knows his shit. Especially for a kid." He then turns back to me for what must have been the third time. I just nod at him before speaking up...

"Alright. Then, take this as well." I take off the type 89 rifle and toss it to the man. Much to Kohta's dismay...

"All of our guns use 7.62 mm, no reason to cut our ammo supply in half just for one gun." I say as I glance at Kohta, who just frowned as he stared at the gun that was now in the man's hands. I think, I could see tears? Forming in his eyes?...

The man then glances at Kohta, who looked like a car collector that just had his brand new car stolen right in front of him...

"Uhh, wait here for a sec." The man quips as he walks back to the building with the rifle in his hands.

"Do we really have to give it away Naier? We could have used it you know. Or at the very least keep it just in case." Kohta says as he stares at me with a sad frown.

"I got the shotgun and p220, you have the AR-10, Saya has the Luger, I can give the new P220 to Takashi, and with this trade, we can give a gun to Saeko as well." I say as I point at Saeko with my thumb.

"That would be unnecessary Naier, I do not need a gun, as I do not even know how to use one." Saeko adds right after me.

"I don't mean to look down on your skill as a swordsman Saeko, after all, I personally know how good you are with a sword. But you always need to have a plan B, the gun, is your plan B. Just have it on you even if you won't use it, if need be, I or Kohta will show you how to shoot later." I say as I turn to look at her, only to see her staring blankly at me...

"Uhh,fine. I'll hold on to your gun for now. At least until you change your mind." I respond with a silent sigh, Saeko nods, before shifting her eyes towards the warehouse ahead of us. As it would seem that something caught her attention. So, I turned around to see what she was looking at.

The, uhh, what's his name again? I don't think he ever introduced himself actually. Anyway, the Tank Top man was walking towards us with 'something' in his hands...

"Holy shit, is that a Scar-H?! I know that the JGSDF uses them, but how did even manage to get one?!" Kohta, being himself. Instantly comes out of his temporary depression the moment he saw the new gun.

"Naier right? I heard what you did for us at the barricade. I also heard that you all are leaving. So take this as thank you. As for where I got it? Should you really be wondering that when we have enough weapons to fit a small army here? Let's just say that Mister Souichiro is a very 'well-connected' man." He extends the arm that was holding the gun, offering it to me. I just nod in response and take the Scar-H...

The moment I got in my hands, I started checking it out. As much as I 'could' check anyway.

(Hmm, other than the fact that it has an 'aimpoint' type scope, rather than just normal iron sights, the gun looks 'normal'. It also has the same three-way sling I had on the Type 89. So, other than the sights, the rest of the gun looks unmodified, at least as far as I can tell.)

I tried looking through the sights, only for the man to speak up.

"It didn't have any batteries in it. Could be its saving grace though, as it might work if you find new ones. Before you ask, I don't have any, I would have tested it myself otherwise." I lift my head as the man speaks and nod at him.

"Nonetheless, thank you. This cuts our ammo procurement to a simple three boxes with three different types of ammo. One for shotgun shells, one for 9x 19 mm, and one last box for 7.62 mm rifle ammo." I turn to Kohta as I speak to make sure he got the message.

Kohta, was just nodding while he kept staring at my new gun. I shake my head and look back at the Tank topped man.

"Sorry sir, but it looks like you pulled this mountain of ammo out here for no reason. We will be taking only one red crate with the buckshot, along with one green crate and one orange crate." I point at the crate pyramid as I speak.

"And, well. Mister Souichiro needs us to be ready as fast as we can, but seeing as this is partly my fault. Want us to help gather them for a short while?" I add as I turn to look at the man. Only to see him shake his head.

"Ughh, I won't lie. It will take me a lot of time to put everything back inside. But I'll probably just wait for somebody to come over and drag him into helping me, then blame you if he asks why he has to help." The man snickers as he speaks, then continues.

"Because as you said, the big Boss is waiting for you, and if you end up being late because of me, he's going to have my ass on a plate, and for good reason too. So it's fine, I appreciate the gesture, but take your boxes and go." I nod at the man, and move to the colorful heap of crates. After going to where the red crates were stacked, I kneel down and open a random one. Shotgun shells neatly organized inside. And, honestly, I don't think I have ever seen so much ammo in one place...

I pick one shell and look at it.

(Hmm slugs usually have the top part of the shell open right? These here have a plastic cover on the top, so I guess they are buckshot ammo. Though it makes me wonder, if buckshot can do so much damage here, what can a slug do? Demolish a whole building just by touching it?)

I closed the crate, and then opened another red one next to it, picking one of the shells from inside. This one did indeed have the top part open, so it was probably a slug.

"I will take one slug just in case somebody, or something, pisses me off beyond belief." I say with a snicker as I pocket it. Then, I turned around to face the group.

"Alright, so how are we doing this? One person carrying a crate full of ammo is as retarded as it sounds, so. all three of us carry one?" I ask. Kohta nods as he moves to me.

"We take the shotgun one first?" He asks.

"Fine by me." I respond as I get up and grab the rope handle. Before Kohta could react, Saeko moved next to me and grasped the same handle I was holding.

(Should I be this happy because she just did something so mundane as deciding to pick the same handle? I need to stop getting excited over every single little thing...)

Kohta moves to the other side and takes hold of the other handle, and with the count of three, we lift the crate.

With the way we picked it up, Saeko and I would be moving backward, while Kohta would move forward. Not wanting to walk blindly while carrying a heavy load. I, while still holding the crate's handle with one hand, turned around. That way I could walk facing forward as well. Saeko glanced at me before doing the same thing.

"Alright, let's get this over with." I say as I start moving.

"Just don't go too fast guys!" Kohta shouts from behind.

Saeko turns to look at Kohta with one eye while she keeps walking.

"And girls..." He adds right after with a slightly meeker voice.

And so, our first trip began. We walked past the estate's yard and into the street, following the same road we used to come here. Not that there were many roads to pick from in the first place though.

And again, nobody was saying a thing as we walked. Not that it bothered me, because I would probably not respond if they did, as there was something else on my mind right now.

(You know, I wonder. Did Saya's dad have all this firepower in the anime too? He did use a lot of dynamites, so I guess he could have decided to use that instead of rockets. And most of the 'guards' in the anime did have guns, and were using them very liberally. Yet, I don't remember them ever saying anything about conserving ammo. So I guess, they might have had a lot of it stocked?

Also, uhh. I expected carrying the crate to be a lot 'harder'. Is it because Saeko is unnaturally strong? Or am I just putting in a lot more effort, not wanting to end up looking like a loser next to her? Heh, guess even I ain't immune to that kind of bullcrap...)

By the time we reached the Humvee, Saya was there with Rei and Takashi, their backs turned to us.

"Hey! Are you all done here?" I shout, causing them to turn around. Saya says something to Takashi before he nods and runs up to us grabbing the box from Kohta's side.

"Thanks man." Kohta replied to the gesture.

"Don't mention it, and no Naier, we still have one more box to go." Takashi replies.

"I see, we have two more left." I say as I look at the two metal boxes next to Saya's feet.

And no, I was looking at the boxes, not Saya's legs... Mostly.

"Alright, I'll go along with you guys for the next ammo crate, I need to ask the guy that manages the armory something anyway." While I spoke we reached the Humvee and loaded the crate inside. Then, the group that was here gathered a few meters away from the Humvee.

"And that question would be?" Saeko asks.

"Whether or not he has a camouflage net to spare." I answer as I turn to Saeko.

"Huh, why would we need that? Also, did your gun change color? I'm pretty sure it was not that orange before." Rei, asks as she joins in.

"No, I exchanged the gun I had for this one. This one has the same type of ammo as our other rifles. And concerning the net, think about it. We have a military-grade, and more importantly, working vehicle, packed to the brim with things that a lot of people would now kill for, the last thing we want is to have it out in the open for every single idiot to see. For example, we would be better off hiding the car if we have the camo net inside a small cluster of woods when we need to

stop somewhere." I say as I point at our car. Kohta, who was still staring at my gun, spoke up next.

"I think I saw some camo nets inside the building they use as an armory, in multiple colors too. Sooo, ehh. If you're going back to the armory anyway. Do you want me to eheheh... make sure the Scar is in working order?" To be honest, Kohta's smile was way too creepy right now, not to mention the fact that he was slowly creeping up WAY too close.

"Please don't do anything weird to my gun." I say as I sigh and undo the sling before giving the Scar-H to Kohta. Who upon taking it in his hands, runs off to the back seats of the Humvee. Hugging it like a golum that just found its precious.

(And he just bailed on carrying more ammo crates. Uhh, whatever.)

I turn around and start walking away, back towards the 'armory'.

"If somebody else is coming to the armory, then come along. I'm not crazy enough to try and carry these things by myself." I say as I stop a few meters away and look back. Saeko nods and starts moving towards me.

"I'll go for the last dynamite box in a bit, I want to take a short break first." Takashi answers as he moves towards the nearest door that leads into a random house's front yard. Rei followed behind him shortly after without saying a word.

(Hmm, I should change Rei's name to Zeke number two the way she just follows Takashi around. Also, did they just walk into the house, by themselves? Are they? Nah, I probably just have a fucked up mind.)

Saya was now the only one by the car.

"Keep Kohta away from the handbrake, please. Don't want to find this place overrun when we return." I say as I look at Saya. She nods

at me, with a surprisingly serious expression before moving towards the Humvee's back seats.

(Huh, does she really believe Kohta can be that clumsy? I understand if it was Shizuka but, ehh... Whatever, better safe than sorry.)

And so, I start walking towards the armory with Saeko next to me. And again, guess what, dead silence. So, about midway through our trip, I decided to change that.

"Hey, mind if I ask you something?" Saeko turned to me with a questioning 'Hmm'.

"Where exactly did you get that sword?" I ask as turn to her and point at the Katana on her hips. She looks at the hilt of the blade before returning her gaze back to me.

"Mister Takagi gifted it to me. From what he informed me, my own father used to train him, so he gave me the sword as payment, of sorts, for my father's lessons." I just kept nodding as she spoke.

(Seems the reasoning stayed the same from the anime. Well, at least from what she told me that is.)

"I see, Heh, I'm starting to feel sorry for whoever or whatever would be stupid enough to get in your way now." I chuckle as I point at the blade with an arched eyebrow. Saeko moved her hand over her mouth as she giggled.

"I am pretty sure you would be as fearsome with a blade Naier." She responds.

"Really?" I tilt my head slightly.

"Yes. And I would like to believe that my judgment on the matter has some weight to it too." She says as she grabs the katana by the hilt and shakes it lightly.

"Well, for now. I guess I will have to stick, to the stick." I say as I point at the bokken on the side of my bag with my thumb. Saeko looks at the bokken before looking back at me.

"I would rather you not call it a 'stick' Naier. It is more than just a 'stick'. The process of crafting a bokken is..."

(Ohh crap, she's about to go Kohta mode on me?)

"I know, my bad, didn't mean to sound disrespectful to whoever spent the time and skill crafting this. Let's just say, wrong wording used to try and lighten the mood." I cut her off. Saeko stops talking, and stares at me for a few seconds...

"Why would you need to lighten the mood? Do you feel, uneasy around me?" She leans slightly towards me as she asks. And well, even with no street lights, the full moon was bright enough for me to 'see' clearly. Especially when she was so close. And...

(Purple lace bra... ughh. Eyes on the face Naier.)

I lifted my eyes, to see Saeko staring at me with a slight smile.

(I swear, this girl...)

"That is a trap question, and I refrain from answering." I fold my arms as I speak, Saeko just leans back to a normal posture and laughs through her nose.

"A trap? How?" She asks.

"Because no matter what I answer, we would still end up with an embarrassing moment for me. And I had enough of these moments for today." I say as I turn to look forward. Saeko just giggled before turning to look ahead as well...

With that episode over, we kept moving towards the estate. And as we knew where the armory was this time around, we arrived there way faster compared to last time.

Once there, I asked Saeko to wait for me by the pile of crates while I spoke with, uhh, Tank Top guy.

(What's this guy's name away, I keep calling him Tank Top guy in my head.)

Upon entering the front door of the armory, I got greeted by a relatively narrow room. Relative, because the 'room' was small as there was a very large fenced-in area straight ahead of me. Without the fence, the 'room' would actually be the whole structure. The inside of the warehouse, as I mentioned, was enclosed by a large metal fence that surrounded the insides like a second structure. The fence itself starting a meter or so away from the actual walls of the warehouse, allowing people to walk around without really entering the fenced-in area.

Our guns were also in the room I was in right now, on a table to my right. Next to several open cleaning kits.

(Hmm all of our guns are here. Huh, didn't expect Kohta to just leave 'em lying around unattended. Does he trust this dude so much? Or did his brain get filled with dancing Scar-Hs and forgot all about them?)

I entered the main building to find the tank top guy looking inside some orange-colored boxes, straight ahead and to my left in a metal shelf row that had a big '2' painted on its side.

The building itself looked like a normal warehouse... except for, you know, it was full of military stuff. I also spotted a couple of the nets that I needed to my right, hanging on the side of the row that had a '5' painted on it. The nets were right under the number itself.

(Seriously, where did Souichiro find all this crap? I won't be surprised if they have a god-dam World War II tank stashed in here somewhere. Still, looking at all this equipment, is leaving really such a good idea? Well, it's not like there's anything I can do about that now, we need to deal with that horde, and fast.)

I shake my head and walk up to the tank top guy.

"Mind if I bother ya for a second?" The man turns his head to me and motions me to continue with his head.

"We will start taking our weapons on the next two crate runs, and I also have to ask whether we can take a camouflage net for the Humvee." I point at the shelf holding the rolled-up nets that I saw earlier.

The man closes the box and moves away from the shelves as he comes up to me and leans to see where I'm pointing at.

"Huh good thinking, you will be like a walking candy bag out there with all that stuff in your Humvee. Take the ones you need, I also took the liberty and exchanged the gun you mentioned. Left the p220 on the desk with the other guns if you didn't notice." With that, he turns around and goes back to the orange crates. I nod and move towards the nets.

Once there, I went 'curtains' shopping.

(Let's see, one with shades of gray, and one with shades of green and brown. I would prefer to go under some trees as they provide additional cover if we were to park the Humvee, but it won't hurt to have an extra urban camouflage just in case.)

I grab the two nets and move back to the 'corridor' room. I then headed to the table and picked the two 'cleaned' rifles before strapping them on me. Then took the p220, making sure the safety was on before shoving it in my pocket.

I also grabbed two cleaning kits that looked to have the most stuff inside before going outside.

Saeko was still waiting by the boxes, her arms folded under her chest as she looked at the people in the distance.

"Orange or green!" I shout as I walk towards her. She turns to me with a confused look.

"... Green?" She replies with some confusion.

"Alright, grab one of the light green crates and open it up for a sec!" I shout back.

Saeko just nodded and did what I asked. After I walk up to her I look at the bullets inside the box, then take off the magazine of the Ar-10 with one hand and look at the bullets inside the magazine, making sure that they were the same ones.

"Alright, we're good. Let's take this to the Humvee." Saeko nods and moves to the front of the crate before picking it up.

I left the cleaning kits on top of the box and grabbed the other side after pushing the shotgun along with the other two guns that I had strapped on me to my back. I must have looked ridiculous, carrying three long guns on me. And once again, we headed towards the Humvee...

The trip was relatively uneventful once again, at least until we were halfway on the road, again. Where we saw Takashi, Rei and Kohta walking towards us.

(I guess Takashi's and Rei's business is done? And Kohta has 'molested' my gun enou... Oh, nevermind. The Scar-H still in his hands.)

Once they got close, Kohta started talking.

"Only the orange one left?" He asks.

"Yeah, the one with 9x19 mm's." I answer.

"Alright we'll get the last crate then. Oh, and the dynamites are all loaded up." Takashi speaks up right after.

I just nodded at him before Saeko and I started moving again.

(Did I really take that long inside the warehouse for them to pass us?)

Reaching the Humvee, Saya was there along with Shizuka and Alice...

They then helped us put the crate inside the trunk, Saya and Shizuka that is, as I don't think Alice was really 'that' much help. Though she did try to help, so she got a cookie for that...

I then took off the guns and left them in the trunk as well. So I could finally stop looking like a gun hoarder with all that guns strapped to me, not that I'm really bothered about it mind you. You can never have 'too many' guns, at least until you need to run that is. And well, I still had the shotgun and the two handguns on me...

And,as I backed off the car...

"Are you all set?" I hear a new voice behind me. Turning to the voice, I saw Saya's mother.

"No, we still have one last crate to pack. After that, we'll leave." Saya replies a bit coldly.

"I, see... " Yuriko glanced at her daughter before turning around to 'look' for something. I just shifted my sight between Saya and her mother a few times before letting out a sigh under my breath...

(I'm never taking that frigging break huh...)

I shake my head and walk up to our resident tsundere.

"Saya." I whisper to her.

"Go talk to your mother properly... " I add as I motion towards her mom with my head.

She turns to me and starts staring. Yet, she does nothing, she just averts her eyes as she starts looking around as well.

(Ohh for fuck's sake, this is not the time to be acting like this ya stupid idiot.)

I took a deep breath, and decided to momentarily 'embrace' my inner stupidity...

"... You can thank me later." I said in a low tone. ignoring all the red flags that were going off in my head...

"Huh, wha... "

Ok, to be honest, I was not really thinking anymore. I just didn't want to see these two split up like this. While I managed to 'save' the estate, it might still be the last time these two could speak with each other for a long time, as we are probably not going to make it back here in time..

So, I ended up carrying Saya to her mother. After picking her up bridal style that is...

"WHA, WHAT ARE YOU DOING! PUT ME DOWN! PUT ME DOWN YOU PERVBRT... Ow..." Saya, amidst her own shouting, ended up biting her own tongue, putting her hands over her mouth as she finally stopped screaming. So, I carried Saya over to her mother, then put her down on her feet. Before turning around to walk away.

"Ohh, and one last thing." I say to Yuriko and Saya as I stop and turn my head slightly to the left.

"This is a, 'A see you soon', not a goodbye..."

And I start walking again. I guess, my words must have carried more weight than I thought, as seconds later, I could hear sniffing. Don't know if it was Saya, her mother or maybe even both of them. But by

the time I returned to the Humvee and turned around, they were already hugging.

(And mission complete. I guess?)

I then glance around, to see Shizuka staring at me, looking all smug...

"Not. A. Word. Out of you, Ai?" I say as I stare at her. She just gave me a wide smile as she tilted her head and closed her eyes. Mollified by her silence, I nod and sit on the open trunk, then just watched the whole event unfold.

The horde that was growling an arm's length away from me, I honestly could not even hear it right now. And then, I felt something tugging my pants.

(God damn it dog, way to ruin the mo... ohh?)

I looked down, but there was no dog there. Instead, it was Alice that was tugging my pants.

"I'm, sorry for calling you evil... " She said the moment she saw me looking at her. I just patted her head as she spoke.

"And what makes you think I ain't evil shorty?" I ask as I look at her.

"Because, Saya is happy now... " She answers bluntly as she stares at my face...

(Oh, crud. Uhhh nope, hold it in. You are an evil overlord, think of guts, blood and shiny meat bicycles. You do NOT get emotional.)

I just kept looking around without speaking. Until my eyes fell on Saeko, who had moved away from the group and was standing by herself on the far right corner of the barricade.

The moment she saw me looking at her, she just looked down on the street by her feet. And while she was no longer looking at me. Her

facial expression was pretty clear.

(Huh? Why does she look so, sad? I would understand if she was jealous if she did indeed 'like me'. But sad? No, something is, not right here.)

While I was thinking about this, Takashi, Rei and Kohta arrived as well. Along with Souichiro.

While Saya and her mother did not seem to really give a single fuck about what was going on around them, everybody was pretty much staring at them now. Hell, even Souichiro was staring.

At least before he turned to look at, me? And then, Rei, Takashi and Kohta also turned to stare at me...

(Huh, what gives?)

I darted my head around, to see Shizuka, who was now sitting right next to me. Pointing her fingers at me, with both hands...

(Ohh, fer fucks sake...)

I grab both her hands and lower them, only for her to lift them again the moment I let her go. I just shook my head and turned to look at the four that were staring at me.

You know, I do know that Souichiro does indeed love his daughter, but seeing him smile like that as he watched them. I knew it was something I would never get to see again...

Souichiro then loudly 'clears' his throat.

"Are we ready?" He asks quite loudly. Saya and Yuriko finally let go after getting the very obvious hint.

"Yes, once we get the crate that these three have over there in the car, we will be ready to start." I say as I get off the trunk of the

Humvee. And point at the crate that Takashi Rei and Kohta were holding. Souichiro just nods affirmatively.

The three then walked up to the Humvee and loaded the last crate, while Saya walked up to her father. I saw him moving his mouth, but I could not really hear what he was saying. Saya responded with a nod and turned toward the Humvee.

(Ok so. All this stuff is, in reality, his. So I should at the very least thank him for letting us bring it with us.)

I walked up to Souichiro as Saya turned around to look at me.

"Thank you for all your help. Until we meet again, good luck, Mr. Takagi." I say as I bow slightly.

"This was not a favor Naier. This is a forward payment." He said as he looked at me all stoic like.

(Jeez, even now you gotta act like a total hardass?)

I just nodded before turning to Saya.

"You got the notebook? God knows we're going to need it from now on. Oh, and a lighter..." I say as I point at the Humvee.

"The textbook is in the car. And no, I don't have a lighter. Why would I even have a lighter?" She replies as she frowns slightly.

(For the dynamites?)

Souichiro then extended his arm towards me, an expensive-looking Zippo lighter in his hand. I nod at the silent agreement and take the lighter.

"Alright, let's go. No more time left to waste." I turned and headed towards the Humvee. By the time I was ready to enter it, the whole group, other than Saya, were already inside it. Saya herself entering a few seconds after me.

I then look at the group as I open up a box of dynamite after taking a seat next in the center.

"You all ready to see how it feels to be part of a really stupid plan?" I say as I wave a dynamite stick at their faces. They all just, stared.

"Not a very good pep talk right before we dive into a horde Naier." Takashi responds. I just chuckled as I moved to the roof by climbing out the open hatch.

"Story of my life." I say under my breath. And a few seconds later...

"Throw the dynamites!" I hear Souichiro shout. At first, I thought he was talking to me. But then, I saw a couple of guards appear in the house to our left. The men then tossed a couple of dynamites to the left part of the street where the horde was located at.

(Huh? When did these guys get there?)

And seconds later, a loud explosion, followed by a chain of other, equally loud explosions. Each one lighting up the dark road while bodies were sent flying, flames swallowing whole parts of the horde.

And soon, after the horde started gathering to the left, the right part of the road slowly started to clear out. But, as more of the horde gathered to the left, they also started pushing up against the left side of the barricade.

(We got to hurry before the barricade collapses.)

"Again!" Souichiro shouts, and moments later, a second batch of dynamites gets sent flying towards the amassing horde.

Frankly speaking, with the number of corpses that got sent flying by the explosion, I thought about getting back inside the Humvee, lest a flying corpse ended up in my face.

(How retarded would it be if I got bitten by a flying head?)

Yet my thoughts got interrupted shortly after, as the Humvee roared to life.

"GO! GO!" Takashi started shouting as he pointed to the right. I turn to look at the right part of the street to see that it was now clear from corpses. And seconds later, the wheels of the Humvee screeched. And with a violent shake, the Humvee moved forward, grinding its sides against the barricade blocks.

I grab the open hatch door to keep myself steady. And the moment I regained my balance, I let go of the hatch's door and flip the lighter open. With a flick of the wrist, I light up the dynamite before pulling my arm back.

(I got a mask, I got a boomstick. All I need is a psycho attitude and I'm ready for Pandora.)

"YOU DON'T DIE TODAY! YOU DIE EVERYDAY!" I shout as I throw the dynamite to my left. Seconds later, a loud explosion sends even more corpses flying. I turned back to see that the corpses by the barricade were also starting to slowly turn around and crawl towards us.

(It's working.)

I look back inside the Humvee to get another dynamite.

"Don't mean to bother but..." Before I could finish, Kohta had already shoved a dynamite to my face.

"You just got promoted." I say as I grab the dynamite and lift my body back out of the hatch. I light the dynamite up and throw it to the left again.

Seconds later, another explosion. I turn to pick another dynamite. Yet, the moment I got it in my hands...

"Slow down!" I hear Saya shout, and seconds later, Shizuka hits on the brakes. Hard. And, guess who was not holding on to something, yeah. Me...

I ended up sliding over the roof and onto the car's hood, almost tripping over to the asphalt, or more importantly, almost ended falling right into the horde that was right next to us.

While I was on my little sliding trip, I looked over the hood, and over Shizuka's deer in the headlights like expression. To see that part of the horde had moved back to the right side of the road, moving towards the opened blockade once again...

The moment my boots touched the hood, I lit up the dynamite, took a step forward, and tossed it forward and slightly to the left. Then, I jump back on to the roof and see Kohta, who had almost climbed up on the roof himself.

"Are you ok!?" He shouts.

"We need a second person to throw dynamites behind us to make the horde follow us." I say as I kneel down on the roof.

"I got the backside!" He shouts, right to my face as he tosses me another dynamite. I nod and turn to see the horde that was still blocking the road ahead.

"Now, would you kindly, MOVE THE FUCK out of my way!" I light up the dynamite in my hand, and once again, toss it forward and to my left.

The explosion that followed some seconds later caused the horde that blocked the way to thin out even more. Seconds later, I heard a second explosion to my back. I turn around to see Kohta ducked down in the car. He pop-ups a second later and passes me another dynamite.

The moment it was in my hands, I lit it up and threw it to the same spot I threw the last two. And finally, after the following explosion, I could see the road ahead. I slap my arm on the roof and shout.

"Step on it! We are getting out of here, now!" The Humvee roars as it starts picking up speed, heading straight towards the opening. Kohta threw one more dynamite before we finally managed to break through the horde, he then ducked back inside the car again.

The moment he got out AGAIN I waved at him to get his attention.

"After this one tells Shizuka not to drive too fast and use the horn, we still need to bait the horde away from the estate. We will use the sticks of dynamite again when we want to get rid of the horde." I say as I look back at the corpses, Kohta nods before turning to throw the last dynamite with a grin.

I then turn to look at the road ahead. Needless to say, every single corpse in the surrounding area was walking towards us.

(Hmm the corpses that are heading towards us will probably end up bumping into the horde that's following us. I suspect the moment they do that, they will turn around and become part of it. But, just to be safe.)

I slide to the center of the roof and look inside through the open hatch, it seems Kohta was telling Shizuka to use the horn.

"On the first chance you got, take a turn away from the road that leads to the barricade. That way we won't make the corpses that are in front of us walk towards the barricade. They would probably just assimilate to the horde and change direction, but I don't want to take any chances." I speak up as I point at the upcoming intersection.

Shizuka just nods as she keeps looking at the corpse-filled road ahead. I nod back and pull myself up to the roof again. I then turned to look at the horde that was following us, I could also see several

light sources behind the horde itself, right where the barricade was at.

I could see some kind of structure being erected where the hole used to be at.

(We, did it. I, did it. The estate still stands and we are driving away, luring the hordes with us...)

I found myself smiling as I looked at the barricade that started to fade away, behind all the corpses that were slowly taking the street back. I then turn around and stare ahead at the road that was illuminated by the Humvee's front lights.

(It doesn't look like it will get much darker than this.)

I nod to myself as I slide towards the hatch.

(Still, there's something else that is bothering me now. If I know anything about this world, it's that it will use whatever reason it has to follow the anime. All those explosions would be the perfect excuse to end up blocked off while we try to reach the mall. Then again, we got the Humvee, and not that flimsy ass six-wheeled, thing. And dynamite. Lots of dynamite.)

With that out of my mind, I enter the car. After taking a seat next to the left-back door window, I turn to the group.

"Everybody still in one piece?" I ask jokingly.

"Yea we are all fine." Takashi replies. I nod and turn to look out of the window.

(From now on, all I can do is hope that the estate won't fall while we are not present. Huh, I hope I haven't jinxed myself by thinking that. Still, it took a god damn 'surprise' E.M.P blast along with a bus crashing into the barricade to make the estate fall, now that we are

past the initial E.M.P, the chance of the estate surviving is much higher, as it won't be caught with its pants down.)

And, so, the moment I accepted that whatever happens to the estate is now beyond my reach and that we left it in a much better state considering the anime and manga. I felt all the energy drain out of me.

"If you all don't mind... I think I will take that break now... "

I say as I lean my head against the window frame and close my eyes.

(Because we are far from done, and I need that god damn break...)

Parking space

When was the last time I did nothing? You know, just sitting back and relaxing? Leaving the rest of the group to deal with whatever crap got in our way, rather than charging headfirst into danger myself...

If we exclude some minor moments, never. I always 'did' something. So, this must be a first. I mean, I did fall asleep shortly after we left the estate. And the horde was still following us, meaning that we were not out of the woods when I decided to pass out...

But hey, I ain't no one-man-army. I can let somebody else deal with this crap once in a while. And well. We were inside the Humvee, so it's not like I bailed on them at an important moment or something. Then again, maybe I have this mentality right now because I'm half asleep and don't give a single fuck about anything...

But, you know what they say. All good things must come to an end...

As the moment my brain realized I was conscious again, it started bugging me, non-stop. Telling me that I needed to think of a plan for the events that will take place in the mall. And annoying as it may be, I knew that it was right.

I move my head slightly and take a deep breath while still keeping my eyes closed.

(Ughhh... I don't even want to open my eyes. Good thing I can think with my eyes closed...

So. Uhhhh, right, the Mall. Asami and Kohta. Shizuka and the rapist. Granny and the clinic. And lastly the extraction helicopters along with the mall getting overrun. If I'm not forgetting something, that should sum up the major events that take place there.

So, let's take things one step at a time now. First of all is getting there...

Uhh, why I get the feeling that I'm forgetting, something?)

And a few seconds later, it hit me....

(Oh, Shit! Saeko. Takashi. Split. Shrine. Fuck! FUCK!)

I opened my eyes abruptly and moved my head slightly to the right as I darted my eyes around the car's interior...

Other than the fact that the sun was up, I could see Saeko sitting next to me with Rei on her right. Takashi was sitting next to Rei, and Kohta was sitting next to Takashi by the car's door, the Scar-H still in his hands.

Yeah, five people in the back seats. Explains why Saeko was pretty much stuck to my side. Not that I'm complaining mind you...

I breathe a silent sigh of relief as I close my eyes again.

(Ok, either the split didn't happen or it didn't happen 'yet'. But the sun is already out, so it might not happen at all. 'Normally' Saeko and Takashi spend the night in that shrine and uhh. Yeah 'things' happen.

Ok so, now that I'm fully awake and 'that' is out of my mind, back to the task at hand. The mall. Let's start with the cop girl that Asami idolizes. She probably left the mall yesterday evening to find help based on what the manga showed, and if she was a wandering corpse right outside the mall, that means she didn't get too far before she got bit.

The way Asami kept on saying how that woman was supposed to be an awesome cop, I find it hard to believe that she would try to return to the mall after she got infected. I'd think she would understand the moral impact it would have if she was seen as a walking corpse. Especially if she was the only hope they had for a rescue.

So my chances of saving her are sadly, probably non-existent. She's most likely already dead by now. Best I can do, is find her before the

others see her and finish her off. If she really is a corpse.

Next, Asami and Kohta. And what I can consider as the main deal with this whole situation. She will have a huge impact on Kohta. I need to make sure she survives, by any means necessary. Even if that ends with me tying her up to a chair and locking her in a god damn storage room in order to prevent her from effectively killing herself...

Though now that I think about it, Kohta no longer has the cop gun to make his first move on her, as I traded it for the p220. Not a very smart move now that I think about it...

But, hmm. I can hide one of the p220s in my bag, say that I forgot it there. Then give it to Kohta so he can give it to her himself. Things should go on 'normally' after that.

And then, we have Shizuka. As much as I want to stop the whole thing from happening, even if Shizuka seemed to be unperturbed after the whole ordeal, it needs to happen. Kohta pretty much makes Asami fall for him then and there.

And lastly, we have the trip for the blood and the rescue helicopters. Not a lot I can do for these two really. The granny will need the blood. So we either go to the clinic, or let her die. Simple as that. One of the survivors from the mall also dies in the clinic if I remember correctly...

As for the rescue helicopters. I could hypothetically get us all extracted right there and then, if I stall the group for long enough. But, we won't get to meet Rei's mother if we stay, and quite possibly, her father in the elementary school. Not to mention that when the group found Rei's mom in the manga, she was in a kind of a tight situation. But, that is still far off, got to focus on the things that will happen before that...)

Keeping my eyes closed, I stopped thinking about what would happen after the mall and started to listen to the engine hum as the

humvee drove down the highway...

I stayed like that for some time, until someone next to me started speaking.

"We are almost out of the highway, the mall shouldn't be too far from here." Opening my eyes, I see Rei talking.

"I just hope we drove the horde far enough." Takashi responds.

"They will be fine. My Papa is more than capable of handling one measly horde. We should be more focused on our problems..."
Saya who was on the front passenger's seat turns to look at Takashi, the textbook in her left hand.

"Saya..." Was the only thing Takashi said in response.

(I never really understood that 'gesture'. Why say a person's name and then just stare at them like some sort of retarded monkey?...)

"Saya is right Takashi, we should focus on our problems" Saeko adds. I shift my eyes towards the window, only to see the shopping mall slowly coming into view.

"Like the fact that Miss Shizuka is driving straight to the mall with a working car?" I say as I keep staring outside.

"Hmm? Ohh. Naier, good morning." Saeko was the first one to respond. I nod in reply as I lift my head away from the window that I was resting my head on up until now. Hearing my neck bones crack as I moved it about.

"Humm. About time you woke up. Leaving us to do all the work while you were off dreaming like an idiot." Saya was the second one...

"Yeah, I love you too dear." I responded groggily as I closed my eyes and put my left hand behind my neck rubbing some of the soreness out.

(I should really find some pillows in the mall, my neck is killing me.)

And the moment I opened my eyes again. A rather thick textbook was flying straight towards my face...

(Again!?)

I slap the book, causing it to hit my legs instead of my face, or well, mask.

"Important information is stored here, don't just toss it around Saya." I say as I pick up the textbook and extend my arm, holding it towards her.

She just responds with her usual huff as she yanks the textbook from my hand, then looks back towards the front of the car.

(Jee, you don't have to like me THAT much.)

"Uhh. Still, slow down the car, we are closing in to the mall. Lots of food and materials that can be used inside. And relatively easy to fortify if compared to what it has inside. There's a good chance that it might have survivors inside." I say as I look back out the window.

"So what do we do? Walk all the way there?" Takashi asks.

"The surrounding area has a good amount of tree clusters that can be used to conceal the Humvee. So, take a wider approach towards the Mall, don't drive straight to it. We'll park the car in a patch of trees after we get relatively close. Just remember to kill the engine before we actually stop, less chance for the car to get surrounded by corpses like that." Shizuka nods after I was done speaking and turns the Humvee to the right at the next intersection, going over a bridge, as there was a river to our right.

"Keep going straight, then turn left a couple of intersections later, we can use the buildings as cover while we close in to the mall" Shizuka does as I asked and turns left two intersections later.

"Don't you think you are, you know, kind of overthinking this?" Rei spoke up as I stared at the mall.

"I'd rather overthink this than end up stranded and having to watch from a distance while a bunch of good for nothings drive off with our car and supplies." I say as I turn to her.

Rei does not respond, and neither does anybody else. Guess imagining what I just said struck home.

"After we park, then what?" Kohta asks after a short silence.

"I think we should leave our guns here for starters. If the mall has survivors inside... " Takashi added. I turned to Kohta who just nodded without much of a fuss. He's the last person who would want to lose the guns after all.

"By the way. How long do you intend to keep hogging my Scar-H Kohta?" I ask as I keep looking at him.

"But you have the shotgun, don't be greedy. " He quipped smugly. As he turned to me.

"And you have the Ar-10, don't be needy." I answer back, just as smugly.

Yet before either of us could continue joking around...

"UGHH! Do NOT start acting like a bunch of idiotic kids that are fighting over toys." Saya says with a groan as she keeps looking at the street ahead. I take a look at her before turning to look back at Kohta, who gives me a rather smug smile.

(Ohhh I will get my gun back, you can count on that buddy.)

So, several minutes and crushed corpse skulls later, we were by the right side of the mall. And the side had no visible windows. I nod to myself and speak up.

"Alright the mall is straight to our left now, I don't see any windows on this side, so turn left and keep going until we see a good cluster of trees we can drive the car into." Shizuka nods once again as she lowers her head slightly. Probably trying to focus. She then turned left, the mall now a straight line from here.

The road ahead, other than being littered with corpses and the occasional car, was relatively clear and surrounded by houses and greenery, dotted with trees. My target? Anything with enough trees that we could use to hide the car in.

(I would rather go into a small park rather than a cluster of trees next to a sidewalk. But the problem with that is that the only place matching the description of a park is next to the mall's open field. Or what 'used' to be a parking lot. In other words, a place so open that we might as well drive the Humvee right into the mall while waving a flag with the words 'free stuff for yall' printed on it. So no, too close and too open for comfort.)

So instead, I chose a rather big cluster of trees I noticed that stood a couple of intersections down the road, relatively close to the mall. I kept staring at that spot as Shizuka drove over the river once more.

And after we closed in to the patch of trees. I got up and leaned between the two front seats of the car in order to get a better look.

"That place looks good. Drive towards that patch of trees and shut down the engine once we get close." I say as I point at the cluster that was to our left with my finger. Shizuka nods, while Saya just stared at me, before slightly leaning away from me...

I turn towards Saya to see Alice sitting on her lap, with Zeke in one hand. The kid then starts waving at me.

"Hey there shorty, young cadet." I called out. The dog upon hearing the word cadet barks at me. Alice then hugs the dog with both hands.

"Zeke is not a cadet, because you are no longer evil." She says with a wide grin.

"Ohh. Damn. I need to get my evil overlord vibes back on. Before I start shooting rainbows like some other dude I know..." I say as I look back towards our soon to be parking space. I could feel Saya staring even more intensely at me now, along with several other gazes on my back.

"Rain, bows?" I hear Saeko ask.

"It's nothing Saeko, really." Takashi responds.

(Says the valiant knight of rainbows and sunshine.)

While I really wanted to say that with some snark, now was not really the time. As we were closing in to the trees that I pointed out.

"Alright. You see the open space between the trunks over there to our left?" I asked. And with a look towards my pointed direction, Shizuka nodded.

"Ok, climb over the sidewalk, and when the car has climbed up, turn off the engine and let the car roll through there." Shizuka just nodded again as I spoke.

And so the moment the Humvee 'bumped' over the sidewalk, she shut down the engine, and let the car slide into the cluster of trees.

"Good, first opening you see on the sides, turn the car either left or right so nobody can see the Humvee from the opening we just used." Shizuka does as I said again and turns the car to the right as she lets the Humvee roll for a while, before she finally presses on the brake.

"Can't go any further, or we will bump into the trees." She says as she turns to me. I nod and turn to the group behind me.

"Alright, I will get the net. Somebody needs to check if the surroundings are clear of corpses. But most importantly, that we did not get spotted by any other survivors." Saeko nods and exits the car through the door on her left. Followed by Rei and Takashi.

They then looked around for a bit... Until...

"Looks clear. I can see some of them coming towards us, but I don't see any people." Rei speaks up. Kohta then moves to exit the car.

"Kohta, guns." I say as I stare at him.

He turned to me, a bit confused, before he realized that he was carrying two rifles while we were supposed to be hiding them.

"Ohh, right." He then leaves the Scar-H on the seat's foot section, along with the Ar-10. Then exits the vehicle. Saya puts the textbook in her bag before leaving the car with Alice. And lastly, Shizuka takes the keys out of the ignition and opens the driver's door.

"Miss Shizuka." I call out to her, she turns to me and tilts her head.

"Can I have the car keys? You uhh, don't have any pockets, and I would rather not leave them in a bag and lose them somehow." I say as I point at her dress.

(I also don't want Mister rapist to find them by accident while he tries to cop a feel.)

She then looks down at her skirt. Or well tried to. You know, her breasts are kinda massive. So, after a couple of awkward seconds, she just nodded and gave me the keys, and then exited the vehicle. The only one left inside now, was me.

(Alright let's get to work.)

I take the two rifles that Kohta left, along with my shotgun and the M1-A1 and hide them in the trunk, under some bags and sheets that

were stashed in there. I then take the urban camo net, open it and hide the contents of the trunk itself.

(While the trunk has no glass window on it, you can still see the contents from the front windshield and door windows. If we're unlucky enough and somebody finds the car, hiding what it has inside might deter them from trying to break-in. Even if it's obvious that the car has something inside, leaving the guns in plain sight is just stupid.)

I then take my bag off and open it.

(Uhh, why didn't I take this thing off before falling asleep?)

And after I quickly glanced at the rest of the group and made sure they were not looking towards me, I took one of the P220 along with its holster and shoved it in the bag. Then take the second P220 that was still in my pocket and put it in the bag as well. And finally, I push both the guns and belt to the bottom of the bag, beneath all the clothes, map and whatever other crap that was stuffed inside.

(Alright, let's get going...)

I strap the bag back on me and exit the car, camo net in hand. After I got out, I walked up to the front door.

(Good thing this Humvee can lock its doors...)

I think as I lock the car and unwrap the net. Then started covering one side of the car, until Kohta came over and helped me cover the other side. After we were done, I joined the group and turned to look at the car.

"Hmm, Not bad. There's a constant shade from the surrounding trees, and the camo net blends in nicely with the surrounding greenery." I say as I nod and fold my arms.

The next thing I heard, was a loud thud, followed by a 'cracking' sound. I turn around to see Saeko standing over a corpse.

"We need to move." She says as she looks at the other corpses that were slowly shambling towards us attracted by the noise we were making.

We all nod and run past the fallen corpse before turning to the left after we reached the sidewalk, and then, went left again after reaching the next intersection.

The Mall was now just one intersection away. And luckily, we also had a building that obstructed the trees that we hid the car into, so it was pretty well covered from any prying eyes that might be looking from the mall.

I grabbed the bokken and pulled it out from the side of my bag, then ran towards a nearby stop sign that was to my right, and took a strong swing at it. My whole arm vibrating from the impact. And while the metal pole echoed, I turned around to look at the corpses that were heading towards the parked Humvee, now slowly turning around towards me.

"Alright, that got their attention." I say as I start running back towards the group.

"We should not waste any more time here, let's go!" Takashi motions with his hand as he starts running. And like that, the group starts running towards the mall.

(Uhh, the fuck did you just shout for you Hombusken?...)

I run up to them and join Takashi, Rei and Saeko in the 'front line', taking the rightmost spot.

"We got a plan or we just beat the crap out of everything till we get there?" I ask as we keep on running.

"Beating the crap out of everything IS the plan!" Takashi responds. I reflexively shifted my sight to Saeko, to see her smiling eerily as she slowly drew her blade from its sheath.

(Oh crap, sword.)

Was the only thing I managed to think before she dashed ahead of us and slashed the head off from the first corpse she got close to. She then sidestepped towards a corpse to her right, slid behind it and kicked it on the back of its knees, decapitating it while it was still on its knees.

"Saeko behind you!" Takashi shouts. She, just grinned as she spun in place and sent another head flying.

(Holy crabs, I actually fought against, that? Why am I not dead again?)

I shake my head and run up to Saeko, or well, I tried to. As in the end, all the group did was run after her as she dashed from corpse to corpse, beheading them with a wide smile on her face.

And like that, we crossed the last intersection and moved down the final straight that led to the Mall's parking field. Upon reaching the end of the road, we moved into the field that led to the Mall, Saeko still several meters ahead of us.

I could now see a door that led into the building about sixty to seventy meters straight from here. With no corpses blocking the way, we all started running towards that door. All of us... But one.

Saeko, instead of going straight towards the door. Charged towards the left, aiming at a mass of corpses that had gathered at the left part of the field. And when I say 'gathered' corpses, I mean as in a mini horde. about twenty or thirty of them, gathered all together.

"Saeko!" Takashi shouts once more. But his shout fell on deaf ears, as she just kept running straight towards the mass of corpses.

(God damn it! Stupid crazy suicidal psychopath!)

I yank my bag off and toss it at whoever was next to me, and then dash straight towards Saeko.

(Stupid! Fucking! Crazy! Arghh! I'm going to kill myself if you die here!)

Even if I was not really that much faster than her, Saeko kept stopping to take out whatever corpse was near her, so. I thankfully managed to catch up before she could get too close to the mass of corpses.

Upon closing in on her, and while she still had her back turned to me. I grab her sword arm by the forearm. Saeko instantly turns around as she tries to yank her arm away, aiming to take a swing at my neck with her blade. Keeping my grip on her arm, I forcefully pull it up and towards me. Causing her forehead to almost hit my collarbone and her sword to pass over my head. I quickly put my free hand under her chin and lifted her head until I could see her face.

"Wrong, direction! Saeko!" I shout at her face.

She, just stared at me as she kept panting. I bring my hand to the back of her neck and bring her face closer to mine, to the point that her forehead was almost touching my mask.

"Snap out of it. Or we both die here." She kept looking at my mask for a couple of seconds, until her eyes finally went wide. Or well, wider than they already were. Her mouth slightly open...

"I..." She begins to speak.

"Not now. We have to move before we get swarmed." I say as I turn around and drag her behind me. Saeko coming back to her senses a couple of seconds later, picking up the pace as I started to feel less resistance coming from her as we run...

And the moment we reached the group.

"What was that?! What just happened?!" Rei 'asks' locking her sight on Saeko, who just slightly turned her head away from the group.

"She didn't see the door. She thought we were going through the front gate." I say as I let go of Saeko's arm and turn to Rei.

"What, but..."

"No time, she took the wrong way, we are fine now, so let's go." Takashi cuts Rei off, much to her dismay as she turns to stare at him with a frown.

"Come on we have to move!" He says as he quickly starts running towards the door. The rest of us running after him shortly after. And as we run, I give Saeko a quick glance.

(This, can't be good.)

And once we reached the door...

"Barricaded, somebody was already here before us." I say as I look at the clutter that was blocking the door from the inside.

"What do we do now? Back to the car?" Shizuka asks while she keeps holding Alice with one hand. Who was, in turn, holding Zeke under her free arm.

Before I could speak up though...

"Huh wait, I think I can see somebody inside." Takashi responds as he starts shouting and waving his arms towards the door. The figure, after apparently seeing us, froze in place and started fidgeting about. Before finally deciding to run up to the door.

And lo and behold, Asami in all her third-person cop glory.

(Well, this was easy.)

"W, wait! Asami will let you in, don't panic, don't panic!" The short cop girl shouts.

(You're the one who is panicking here shorty...)

She hastily and quite clumsily lifted the clutter away from the door as we looked at the corpses that were shambling towards us. Thankfully too far for any real cause of alarm.

And the moment the door opened, we all got inside. We then slammed the door shut and started re-barricading it.

"Thank you." Takashi nods at Asami as he takes a few deep breaths and puts his hands on his knees, after we were done blocking the door.

"It's alright, it's Asami's job to protect civilians." She says with a smile.

The group just stared at the strange cop for a while. Until Rei spoke up.

"You're, a Police officer? Do you know Tadashi Miyamoto? He's a police detective, is he alive? Do you know where he is?" Rei almost walks into Asami as she barrages her with questions. The cop girl puts her hands forward as droplets of sweat start running down her forehead.

"I... I'm sorry, Asami, she doesn't know." She closes her eyes and smiles awkwardly as she shakes her head. I, just shook my head as I looked at Rei's sour expression.

"What she meant to say is, her name is Rei Miyamoto. I'm Naier Sepfier. The guy next to her is Takashi Komuro, behind him is our school nurse Shizuka Marikawa. Next to Shizuka is Alice Maresato and next to Alice is, uhh, the Cadet." I say as I point at the dog.

"His name is Zeke!" Alice shouts as she puffs her cheeks. The rest of the group then goes on to introduce themselves, by themselves.

"This police officer is Asami Nakaoka." She says as she, salutes? At us with a smile. Kohta being the only one returning that salute because 'Kohta'.

"We should head inside, staying by the door will only attract more of them." Takashi speaks up shortly after as he points at the door, the corpses banging on it.

With that, we started going down the relatively dark corridor. And as we walked, I remembered something important.

"Uhhh, where's my bag?" I ask as I realized that I just tossed it before chasing after Saeko. Only to have it land on the left side of my head shortly after.

I grab the bag and dart my head to the left only to see Saya glaring at me as she puffed up her cheeks.

"Watch where you throw your stuff, you idiot. And what do you even have in there, rocks?" She says as she massages the right part of her forehead...

"Uhh, You know. Stuff." I say as I casually throw the bag over my shoulder, ignoring the obviously annoyed tsundere as she glared at me.

And so, like that. We moved to the center part of the mall. Once there, Asami pipes up.

"Asami has to make sure nothing happened with all this commotion, so she will have to leave now." She bows at us and turns around, before turning to us again.

"If you need anything, tell Asami!" She says with a smile before running off.

And now, we were left in the middle of the mall's central room... After a few moments of silence passed...

"We should spread out, check the place out, make sure it's safe, and see what we can find in here." Takashi speaks up, and the group nods before slowly splitting up.

Saya and Kohta left towards the market area.

Takashi went up the stairs along with Alice.

Rei followed Takashi while Zeke followed Alice.

Shizuka trotted off by herself.

(Alright, I need to figure out what to do with Kohta. Got to give him the gun so he can give it to Asami, but without making him think that I'm interested in her. Because I am doing this for him, not to get Asami infatuated with me.)

I look around to see that I was the only one left now.

(Huh where did Saeko go? I didn't see her leave.)

I dart my head around to see her going up an escalator, several meters straight and slightly to the right from where I was standing.

(I need to get to Kohta. But, uhh, the little stunt she just pulled. She better not try to do something stupid now. I will check on her, then go to Kohta.)

And so, from a relatively safe distance, I followed Saeko as she slowly walked up the stairs. After that, she kept walking around the second floor aimlessly before stopping to enter a clothing store to her right.

(Alright, no more creepy stalking.)

I think as I walked towards the store that Saeko just entered.

"Ey! Naier!" I hear someone shout from behind.

(Ohh for fuck's sake, have better timing next time, please.)

I turn around to see Takashi waving at me. I glance back at the store that Saeko just walked into before turning to walk towards Takashi.

(I want to make sure Saeko is fine. But I don't think bringing everybody to her is a good idea right now.)

I sigh under my breath and start walking towards Takashi.

(Hope she won't do anything stupid while I am not looking...)

A town of shops

(I'm getting some really intense Dead Rising vibes from this place. Because, you know, zombies and Shopping Malls. Wouldn't it be funny if the granny here actually had a dog too? Heh.

Though, now that I think about it, can animals even get infected? I know corpses are attracted to the sounds they make. Like, the way little ol' Zeke got a horde right outside of Rika's house by his incessant barking.

Yet, I have not seen a single animal corpse yet, walking or otherwise. I think I should be glad about that too. The last thing I need is resident evil zombie dogs. Yeah, jumping through windows and being able to run faster than your average human? No fucking thank you. But in any case, time to get back to it.)

I get up from the cushioned bench I was sitting on and exit the store that I decided to take a break-in. Which also happened to be the same store that I saw Saeko enter before Takashi interrupted me. Sadly, by the time I got back here, Saeko was nowhere to be seen.

As after Takashi dragged me along to check the barricaded doors, a good one hour had passed. During that time Rei left too, saying that she wanted to check the stores for things that we could use. Though I think she just got salty because she wanted to be alone with Takashi. And apparently, he was too dense to get the memo.

(Still, if both Rei and Saeko have disappeared, could they be at the bike store like in the manga? Hmm, I did spot such a store while I was walking with Takashi. So, yeah, let's go check that out. I want to make sure that Saeko is still in the building at least.)

I nod to myself and start walking on the second-floor walkway.

(The store was on the second floor if I was not mistaken, so if I keep going straight from here, I should find it on my left.)

While I kept walking, I looked to my right, over the railing and at the floor below. To see some of the other survivors strolling about. I could not make out who was who though, other than the fact that they were all guys.

(So far, I didn't have to interact with any of them. And honestly, I'm aiming to keep it that way too.)

After a couple of minutes, I also spotted Kohta, Saya, Alice and Takashi down there as well, speaking near the entrance of a store. Shortly after, I saw Takashi and Kohta walking away while Saya left with Alice in the opposite direction.

(I remember this scene. Kohta must be heading towards the bike store along with Takashi, right? Hmm... yeah, that could work.)

I pick up the pace and keep moving forward, following behind the two guys from a relative distance...

And in the end, thankfully, I was right. As after they went back to the second floor, they kept walking for a couple of minutes, until they reached the bike store. Rei and Saeko inside.

(She's still here, good.)

Some seconds later, Rei called out to Takashi. And he, along with Kohta, walked inside the store.

(Nobody noticed that I was here? Eh, meh whatever. Tis the Ninja Penguin skills.)

I turned around and walked towards the nearest bench, then took a seat.

(I'll just wait for them to finish, don't feel like joining in anyway.)

After I sat down, I took off my bag. Opened it, and looked inside.

(Uhh, why did I leave all these goddamn clothes in here? Got to leave them in the Humvee first chance I get. At least they work well enough at hiding the two handguns for now.)

I then take the bokken off the bag's side and look at the wooden blade.

(Hmm. Wonder how sturdy this thing is. The one that Saeko used didn't even have a scratch on it, even after she went nuts on multiple corpses with it.)

I strap the bokken back on the bag's side and lean my back on the backrest behind me, relaxing as I let out a sigh...

And several minutes later, the guys finally got out of the store. And this time, they did end up seeing me after they walked out.

"Oh, Naier!" Kohta waves at me as he shouts.

I turned my head and looked at the two guys as they moved towards me.

"Found anything useful?" He asks the moment he got near.

"Not yet. But I am interested in checking any electronic stores this place has. I have the feeling that the other group of survivors in here might have discarded everything in as busted." I reply as I fold my arms.

"Hmm. But Naier, even if we do find anything that works. Won't the other group demand that we hand it over? They have already laid claim to everything in here." Takashi responds.

I just chuckle as I get up and throw my bag over my shoulder.

"If they find out, yes. So we just make sure, that they don't." I reply as I motion the two guys with my head and start walking.

"Well, look who just became ruthless." I hear Kohta say as he snorts through his nose.

"What do you mean 'became'? I'm already an evil overlord buddy, ask mister rainbow knight if you don't believe me." I say as I turn around and point at Takashi, who just rolls his eyes and shakes his head.

"Uhh. You actually said something like that back in the car as well. What gives?" Kohta asks as he scratches his head. I just jerk my shoulders lightly as I let out a dry laugh.

"Ehh it's a long story, with the short version being that Alice thought I was trying to make Zeke my evil, minion? Yeah, that. So, she asked Takashi for help, meaning he's supposed to be the righteous hero in shining armor in this equation, no?" I say as I chuckle. Kohta just let out an awkward laugh as he tilted his head.

"Don't you think Zeke is a little too, fluffy, to be an evil minion?" He responds as he looks at me, folding his arms.

"Well, I wouldn't say no to a sarcastic, sentient ninja robot dog." I answer as I turn away from the two and start walking down the stairs.

We then went on with some mindless chatter for some time as we roamed about on the first floor...

Until, we heard shouting...

"Where's the help we have been promised?! You can't keep us in here like prisoners while you do nothing!" The three of us stop in our tracks, and turn towards the shouting voice.

"B... but... Asam... this Officer is still a new police officer, she..."

"I don't care! You are a cop! So do your goddamn job and protect us!" A female voice interrupts Asami.

While the voices came from the store next to us, I could not see any people in the store. Maybe they were in the staff room?

"Is that supposed to be a meeting, or a screaming blame fest?" I 'ask' as I frown.

"All they're doing is dump their problems on the officer." Takashi responds, with not a small amount of anger leaking through his voice.

"And the fact she's outnumbered everybody to one does not help either..." Kohta adds right after.

"Well then, think it's about time we repaid her for letting us in?" I say as I turn to the guys. They both grin slightly as they look at each other before they shift their sight to me.

"Got a plan?" Kohta asks.

"As a matter of fact my friend, I do. And you're the main part of it." I say as I point at Kohta, take off my bag and kneel down. Kohta folded his arms as he stared at me with his head slightly tilted.

"Pop quiz time." I speak up as I put my hand in my bag.

"What can a cop have and is normally considered illegal to own in Japan?" I say as I reach around the bottom of my bag carefully. No need for an accidental discharge here of all places...

Both guys narrowed their eyes as they started thinking, or well, Takashi did...

"Guns." Kohta responded almost instantly.

"Ding, Ding. Two points for you. Now, what was our dear cop missing?" I ask again as I pull out the P220...

"A gun..." Takashi responds as he looks at the handgun.

"Correct." I say as I get up and walk up to Kohta.

"You found this on the ground outside, and you thought a cop would be better off with it." I say as I give the gun to Kohta.

And before he could respond, I continued, this time with a degree of seriousness.

"Pay attention to the 'you' in this Kohta. We must not make the other group realize that we, as a group, would give away a gun willy nilly. Judging by the way they acted with Asami, I can bet that they would raise a huge stink demanding that we give them guns too. So, Kohta, you're the gun expert here, make a 'connection' about the gun and the police force and then 'return' it to her." I say as I take a step back. And Kohta starts grinning like a madman.

"I have mixed feelings about giving away a gun. But, heh, I got you covered. Asami will be rocking a new handgun by the time I'm done." He says as he looks at me with the grin still on his face. I nod, return to my bag, close it, and pick it back up.

"Alright, better if we're not seen all gathered out here then. So, I'm going to go deal with some unfinished business." I say as I turn my back to them, wave my arm, and start walking away.

(Alright, that should settle that matter.)

I nod to myself and wear the bag on one shoulder, then move towards the nearest escalator.

(Now, I REALLY need to find Saeko...)

And so, I returned to the bike store, only to have the same result as before.

(Fucking figures)

It was empty, Saeko and Rei seemed to have already moved on elsewhere. I sigh under my breath and start wandering around the

second floor again, hoping to find our crazy purple-haired Samurai mid-way.

(Ok, let's see. Saeko looked, shaken up after what happened in the parking field. So, if I was a sadistic, yet possibly depressed person, where would I be? The roof? Hmmm, the giant windowed wall on the front part of the mall? Smashing up mirrors in the toilets? Uhh, she could be anywhere but, well, I got nothing to lose. So let's start with the windowed wall as it's the closest one.)

With that, I continue walking on the second-floor walkway towards the front part of the building, where the giant glass wall was at...

And, upon reaching near the end of the walkway which then turned right. I see a certain purple-haired person standing there, to my right.

(Holy crabs. Well, that was fast. I should be a friggin detective or something.)

Saeko was leaning against the railing as she stared outside, at the corpses on the parking field.

(Ok, Naier, do NOT fuck this up. Or you're so fired.)

I take a deep breath and walk towards Saeko.

She must have been really out of it, she didn't even react when I leaned on the railing next to her.

"How are you holding up?" I ask as I stare at the corpses below as well.

Saeko turns to glance at me before lowering her head, looking back at the corpses.

"I am, sorry" Was the only thing she said.

I laugh lightly through my nose.

"Don't be, mistakes happen. Or did you forget all the bad calls I made so far?" I respond.

"Yours were different. I... "

"Nothing is different Saeko, you made a bad call in the heat of the moment. And, I don't know about the rest, but from my side at least. I'm actually more bothered to see you down in the dumps like this." I say as I lean even more on the railing before springing myself back and turning around, leaning my lower back on the railing as I cross my legs.

Saeko just turns to look at me, a slight smile appearing on her lips as she turns her sight back towards the car lot.

"Should you really be this forgiving?" She asks as she keeps looking at the shambling corpses outside.

"Only when that person deserves it." I answer back.

"But, I do not des..."

"Saeko! Naier!" Then, a childish voice interrupted her mid-sentence. I turn my head to the left, to see Alice running towards us with a panicked expression. The moment she got close, she drops her hands to her knees and starts taking deep breaths

"Sh... Shizuka's in big trouble!" With her hands still on her knees, she shouts before either of us could speak. I turn to look at Saeko, her grim expression disappearing as she nods at me.

"Where?" I ask as I turn to Alice.

"The store with all the beds and pillows." She responds as she points her hand behind her, at a store that was towards the left part of the building.

I nod and give Saeko one last glance before breaking into a dead run.

(It should be fine, Asami should have the gun. And Kohta should be able to deal with this. He, better be. Because if that guy as much as touches Shizuka wrong while I'm there, I'm going to rip the nerves out of his fucking skin.)

It must have taken me less than a minute to actually get there, but it honestly felt like seconds. And the moment I entered the store, I saw Shimada sitting on the corner of the bed with a shit-eating grin, staring at Asami as she pointed the gun at him.

Shizuka was on the other side of the bed, her pants unbuttoned and her blouse over her chest, which she was trying to cover with her hands.

I look around the store as I walk up to Asami.

(The rest of the group is not here yet...)

As I get close, Shimada turns to me and raises an eyebrow.

"Huh, and what are you supposed to be? The group's clown? Or are you that ugly that you need a mask to even walk around?" He sneers as he looks at me.

(Great. Another talking donkey.)

The guy then started laughing through his teeth as he pointed the knife at me.

"Say ugly, I'll do ya a favor. Get that gun off that stupid cop bitch and I will let you have the front hole." He says as he points the knife behind him.

Shizuka's eyes go wide as she turns her sight to me and starts violently shaking her head, while Asami starts darting her head between me and Shimada. Clearly in a panic. I, just let out a deep sigh.

"Is your brain always a dumpster fire? Or it's just a 'now' moment because it got overridden by your dick?" I 'ask' as I tilt my head.

Shimada's eyebrow twitches lightly as his grin turns into a scowl.

"Ohh? So you think you are a fucking hero ahh, fuckface? Maybe I should fuck this bitch right in front of you, maybe that will teach you what happens when clowns like you run their mouth." He says as he slowly gets up from the bed and glares at me. Yet, he does not move any further.

"Just! Stop this already!" Asami cries out as the gun keeps shaking in her hands...

I, also must not have realised it because of 'tunnel vision'. But apparently. Both groups have finally gathered here...

"Clown huh? Heh, let this clown tell you what will happen now then. Either you stop this by yourself, here and now. Or, you get stopped by force. Though, do know that if we have to resort to force to stop you. Don't expect any forgiveness down the road." The guy, just started laughing at me, laughing rather hard too.

"Forgiveness?! Why would I want to be forgiven by you fuckshits? You know! Maybe I should fuck the rest of your little group while I am at it! These bitches are probably wasting away if the only thing they have around is guys like you!" He says as he points his knife at me and slowly steps away from the bed. I, just smiled under my mask.

"Because, you just done and fucked up." I say calmly as I fold my arms. Shimada, didn't get the time to utter any more stupidity. As a shadow appeared behind him.

A thin shining line went over his head and wrapped around his neck. And whatever stupid thing was about to flow out of his mouth, got replaced by another sound. Choking gasps.

I had seen Kohta hiding behind some mattresses a little further away from the bed that Shizuka was on for some time now.

And the moment mister 'thinking with your dick' got far enough from the bed. Kohta crawled up the bed Shizuka was on and behind the soon to be rapist. And, well, we got to where we were right now.

Shimada drops the knife as he starts desperately clawing at his neck, and the rest of the 'scene', played out normally.

Kohta 'asked' Shimada to listen to what the police officer has to say before kicking him to the ground after he stopped resisting. Takashi then disarmed him while Kohta slowly sneaked away, with me following behind him...

"Well, maybe I should start calling you rainbow knight number two." I say as I walk up to Kohta, after picking up some distance.

He just darts his head to me before he starts chuckling as he rubs his nose.

"That was some good teamwork there. You saw me hiding behind these mattresses didn't you? I saw you looking at me for a moment. Or well, I think I did, you know. Mask." Kohta responds. I just nod.

"Yep I saw you hiding back there, figured you would have a better chance disarming him rather than risking a frontal attack, so I just got him talking..." I answer as I fold my arms.

"Still, UGHHH. I just want to rip his friggin teeth out and replace them with inward facing nails. Then starve him and serve him a hard cold stake." I say as I jerk my shoulders and bring my hands up to my chest then bend them in a claw-like motion. Kohta just nods repeatedly.

"Yea I know what you mean. The things he said... "

"The mask does NOT! Make me look like a clown!" I cut him off as I turn to him, pointing at my face.

Kohta just stared at me like an idiot. And several seconds later, I just burst out laughing. Kohta following suit shortly after.

"Seriously though, good call there." I say as I strongly pat Kohta on the back, sending him a step forward.

"OW, oi take it easy, I'm a long-range player, no defense at all." He says as he starts shaking the shoulder I just pat... Ok, the shoulder I just slapped.

"Really? You seemed pretty up close and personal to me back there." I say as I point behind me with my thumb.

"That was a co-op stealth move, it doesn't count." He responds as he grins without opening his mouth.

"Whatever you say Rambo. Oh, I mean rainbow knight mark two." I say as I lift my hands to shoulder height and shrug. Kohta just shook his head.

"Your naming ideas though. They need some major improvements." He answers as he folds his arms.

"What?! But Rector was an awesome name... " I say as I dart my head to him.

"Hey! Leave my gun out of this! It was a great weapon!" He responds as he points at me accusingly.

"Ehh. Yea, I won't deny that. It was pretty lethal after all." I answer as I tilt my head and look away.

"In any case, I'll get going, see ya later captain." I pat Kohta on the back again and change direction.

I then move to the second floor and head towards the nearest door that led to the mall's actual staircase...

(Well, now that that's over. Next is, the clinic huh? It's been some time since I actually fought corpses in close quarters, maybe I should sit this one out? The others should be able to handle it. Other than that, I know I don't wanna be at our next group meeting, what with Rei being more bitchy than usual...)

Upon reaching a gray, fireproof double door. I open it and meet two sets of normal stairs.

The one on the left going downwards, with the label 'Garage' on the wall to my left

The other going up, the label 'Third floor - roof' the wall to my right.

I pick the right staircase and start going up.

(Still, if I don't go to the clinic, that dude from the other group will most likely die. And, uhhh, since I've been hogging the shotgun, Takashi never used it. So he probably wouldn't bring it with him to the clinic, and without it he won't be able to make that hole in the ceiling. Uhhh, crabs, looks like I managed to drive myself into a corner here, again. I wanted to stay back and deal with Saeko, but I guess I'll have to go to the clinic whether I like it or not. Ugh, places where sick people gather in a zombie apocalypse. What could ever go wrong.)

Upon reaching the top of the stairs, I was greeted by another single gray metal door. I give its handle a push, and the door opens with no resistance. The first thing that welcomed me to the roof, was a gust of cold wind.

(And of course it would be windy up here.)

I walk straight to the edge of the building and sit over it, my feet dangling in the air. I then put my hand under my chin and look at the

field below me, before turning my head towards my left, in the general direction that the Humvee should be at...

(I should find out where they keep the canned food and water. If the mall falls, nobody will care who takes what. And, speaking of food, normally I should be starving by now. I have not eaten anything since yesterday noon? Yet, I don't feel hungry at all. Uhh whatever, I'll eat when I feel like it.)

My sight then stops at the grouped up corpses. The same ones Saeko tried to dive into.

(And then, we have Saeko. What am I going to do with her? She's starting to act up, and I don't think that the little five-minute pep talk I had with her by the windowed wall can act as a replacement for what happened at the shrine between her and Takashi. Ughh, come on Naier, think, think. You stopped Takashi and Saeko from getting together, so if she dies now. It's all on you.)

As I kept staring at the grouped up corpses, I also noticed something. A corpse in a blue uniform...

(Huh, wait, is that?)

I lean my head forward and squint my eyes as I try to get a better look. Not that it really helped mind you. But, I was sure of it.

(The other cop. Huh, did the mass of corpses gather there because of her? But, with so many corpses, there should have been nothing left of her. So, did she just happen to follow whatever caused the corpses to gather there? Or did she turn before they could tear her to pieces? Whatever the case, there is still some time before the rest of the group spots her. So if I could just...)

"So this is where you were hiding after all!" And a loud voice interrupts my thoughts...

Turning around, I see Kohta walking towards me, map and binoculars in hand.

"I needed some fresh air." I say as I turn my body to the side, so one leg was hanging over the wall while the other was on the roof.

"Uhh, should you be sitting like that Naier? It's a long drop you know." He asks as he sits on the ground next to me, next to the railing I was on.

"I'll be fine." I answer as I raise my arm and then let it fall...

(I also need to be able to see Asami coming so I can leave before she decides to bail because of me.)

"Well, just avoid Saya for a while." He adds with a chuckle.

"Huh, what do you mean?" I ask as I tilt my head.

"She was pissed that you skipped the meeting we had. We could not find you anywhere." He responds.

(Ain't Saya always pissed at me though?)

"I will make sure to stay out of her way for now then." I say as I turn to look at the mountains in the distance.

Kohta then filled me in on the meeting. That being that Takashi and the rest agreed on looking at a bank vault for working electrical equipment, and that we ain't sharing...

After that, we then stayed silent for some time, Kohta scribbling on his map, while I kept checking the door that led to the lower floors.

(Still, even if we find working phones and computers, the electrical grid is dead, we can't charge them when they run out of batteries. That is where solar panels should normally come into play, but we need to find a place to stay permanently for that to be even feasible.

Maybe some kind of portable generator for now? But these are loud as crap and not very fun to carry around.)

After turning my head towards the door for what must have been the millionth time, I noticed that it was actually open this time around. I then keep staring at the door. And, I see an orange-haired head pop out slightly from the open gap, and then immediately retracting back behind the door.

(Yeah, time to leave.)

"Well, I got stuff that needs doing, so I'll leave ya to it." I say loudly as I get up, take one last glance at the corpse in the cop uniform and shake Kohta lightly on the shoulder. He responds with a nod without turning his head.

And so, as I moved towards the door...

By the time Asami peeked through the door again, she found me staring right back at her. She kept staring at me for a while before letting out an awkward laugh.

"A, Asami was just. This officer, was just, emm." She whispers, stuttering like mad.

I just open the door as she takes some steps backwards. I then enter the building, turning around and closing the door slightly, making sure that Kohta has not seen us. Then turn to Asami.

"I think he will be quite happy to see you right now." I say cheekily as I walk past her.

"Ummm Asami was really just... "

"Come on officer, get going. Or did you make me get up and leave the roof for no reason?" I cut her off as I turn around midway on the stairs and chuckle. Asami fidgets about for some seconds, until she finally capitulates.

"T, thank you." She bows down to the point that she almost folded in two. I just nodded as I turned around to walk down the stairs. Seconds later, I heard the door open, then close.

(You owe me big time Kohta. Playing cupid for your sorry ass while I still have my own shit to deal with. Why isn't anybody trying to hook me up with Saeko and Saya?

Huh, probably because one of them is more toxic than a golden toad, and the other gets hot and bothered as she beats you to death.

Not that they know the last one but ehh. Whatever. Still leagues better than Rei's self-centered, bitchy attitude.)

After going down the stairs, I took the exit on the second floor and started uhh, window shopping, for the lack of a better term...

Until, I stopped outside an electronics store to check what's actually left inside. Imagine my surprise, when I found that it looked untouched,

(Nothing has been taken.)

Everything was still neatly organized on the shelves.

(Figured, the people here didn't even bother. Don't they realize how important even working wires are right now? Matters not, better for me. More stuff to take.)

I take a step back and turn around, no need to start picking the place from now. I then head to the railing in front of the electronic shop and lean on it.

(Now, how do I go about the blood transfusion kerfuffle? In the manga, they end up going to the clinic because, one, Alice guilt trips them into it, and two, Asami tries to play the fucking hero. Me on the other hand. I got another plan.)

And right on cue, I spot the guy with the shaved head waving at me from one-floor below. Think his name was. Hiro or something?

"Hey! Mask man, have you seen the Police officer?! The granny ain't doing too good!" He shouted as he started taking deep breaths.

I point at the ceiling with my index finger.

"Roof!" I shout back.

He nods and starts running towards the escalator. After he reached the second floor, he turned to me again.

"The old lady and that hot nurse from your group are on the first floor! Down the escalator keep going left and you'll see them!" He shouts before going through the fireproof double door...

(Alright, let's go.)

I nod to myself, lift myself from the railing, then follow Hiro's directions.

(I also need to get our guns from the Humvee, I am not going to a frigging clinic unarmed. Something that the other group does not need to know. Hiro will eventually see the guns if he comes along but. If I just let him die...

... Uhh, what the fuck am I even thing. Pull yourself together Naier, you're not going to let that guy die just because he finds out that we have guns. I'll end up becoming worse than Shido if I keep thinking like this...)

I shake my head and start running. After going down the escalator and turning left, I keep running forward. I then kept looking at the stores as I sprinted past them. Until, I finally saw a group of people inside a store ahead of me to my right...

I stop running, and then enter that store. Shizuka, Takashi, Rei, Saeko and Saya were already there. From the other group, a woman

in a black shirt, an old man, and some balding office worker were there.

"About time you showed up." Saya, who had changed to her new clothes, said to me with a frown.

"Sorry" I just shrugged and said nothing more as I walked towards Shizuka. Anything I might have said, would probably have ended up with Saya backlashing anyway. And now was not the time. I then looked at the granny before turning towards Shizuka.

"How bad is it?" I ask.

"She suffers from R.A and needs a blood transfusion." She answers bluntly.

"Or?" I ask back.

Shizuka just lowers her head and does not answer, the answer being obvious by her silence. I just nodded and stayed quiet...

Kohta, along with Asami and Hiro arrived a couple of minutes later, Alice also joined up shortly after, carrying a bunch of, what I think are emergency packs? Could not really see from this distance. The 'scene' then went on as it did in the manga.

Takashi, saying that he will donate his blood and Shizuka getting all fidgety for some reason. Kohta, showing his more than basic knowledge on how blood and plasma transfusions work. And finally, Saya, dropping the 'why us' bomb. And as Shizuka froze in place, seemingly bewildered by the fact that Saya even said that.

"I hate to say it, but..." Takashi started speaking...

(Alright, time to change the flow of this party.)

"I'll go." I cut Takashi off.

My whole group turning to look at me like I just said a bad joke.

"What!? Naier! You can't just..." Saya began to speak as her eyes went slightly wide before her usual frown returned to her face.

"But I'm not doing it for free." I cut her off as well.

Now, the other group was looking at me funny.

"Please! I'll give you all of my own share, just save my wife!" The old man shouts as he puts his hands together and bows, his face looking straight at the ground. Causing the other group's frown to deepen even more.

"You, you are awful. You are going to blackmail us now that we are in need? Even after we decided to let you all in?" The woman in the black shirt hissed at me.

('You' didn't let me in, Asami did. If it was up to you, I give it a fifty-fifty that we'd be still standing outside.)

"I won't take anything out of your pockets or stockpile." I respond as I shake my head.

"If I go to the clinic. Whatever I get in my bag stays with me." I say as I point at my bag with my thumb.

"And no, I don't mean I will hog all the blood the old lady needs to twist your fingers either. Painkillers, antibiotics, bandages, disinfectants. Things like that." I add, the other group beginning to relax slightly.

"And if the clinic has nothing. Then I again, won't take anything from you." A short silence followed after that. Until...

"I will accompany Naier" Saeko was the next one to speak up.

(Hmm. Oh, it's just Saeko...

Huh, wait, what? Saeko? I'm sure she didn't go to the clinic in the manga...)

Probably realizing that I was staring at her, Saeko started speaking again.

"If you are aiming to fill your bag with medical supplies, you will be vulnerable. It will weigh you down and make noise." She says as she rests her hand on the hilt of her Katana.

"So I will come along." She says she keeps staring at me. I, could feel a slight smile appear on my face.

(It seems that my little speech had an effect after all, or at least it feels like that.)

"If the building has corpses inside, we might end up with some close-quarter combat. If you want to come Saeko. Then you're more than welcome. You can probably handle close combat better than me anyway." I respond as I nod. Saeko smiles at me and nods back.

(It seems that the clinic-delving group, is Saeko and I. Damn, this almost feels like a date. A date where one of the two people in it don't actually know that it's a date.)

Saya then began to dart her head between me and Saeko, and. Decided to break the silence that was taking over...

"I, I'll come too!" She barked up. The whole group turning to look at her.

"What, my mama gave m..."

(OH SHIT!)

"You're H-Q." I cut her off as I point at the two letters on her shirt in an effort to distract our 'genius'. Saya followed my finger until she ended up staring at her own chest.

"Where are you looking at you pervert!" She shouts as she covers her chest.

(Idiot almost blurted out that her mother gave her a gun...)

"Shizuka will need somebody with a brain to help her keep the old lady alive, and. There's something else I want you to do anyway." I say as I lean slightly forward.

Saya just shifted her head away and didn't speak back, her frown still visible on her face.

(At least she didn't flat out deny doing something that I asked of her...)

"Asa, this Officer will go too." Asami says right after.

"Na, Nakoaka! Bu, but it's way too risky!" Kohta shouts right after.

(Ohh sure, now you say that it's risky. But when I said that I would go, you just twiddled your thumbs. Kohta ya friggin traitor.)

I chuckle under my breath as I arch an eyebrow.

"Hmm. I'll go too then, same deal with Naier." Takashi added shortly after.

Rei then turns to look at Takashi, and opened her mouth.

"Then I'm coming as well, the more things we can get for my group the better. And..."

"But then only your group will get things from the clinic, we need that stuff too you know!" Only to get cut off By Hiro.

(Hmm. No you don't Hero.)

"As I'm already playing the role of the black sheep in here, I would rather have Kohta with us." I say as I point at our gun nut.

"And yes, it would mean that only our group will get any medical supplies. But as I see it. Kohta has some medical knowledge on

blood transfusions, so he will be better at gathering what the old lady needs. Plus we'll have better coordination like this. Don't take this the wrong way, but I prefer to avoid leaving things on luck. What's the point of saving one person, if we end up losing two in the clinic because we could not work together efficiently?" After I finish speaking I fold my arms. Hiro just, stared at me.

"No need to worry ! This officer will get things for her group!" Asami speaks up shortly after. Hiro, still did not budge.

"Did you forget why we are going there in the first place, Hiro? The more time you spend trying to cut a bigger deal for your group, the closer you bring the initial task to end up in failure." I add as I point at the sick old lady.

Hiro, finally sighs as he raises his arms, and with an annoyed smirk, he takes a few steps back with a slight 'bow'...

(I'm doing this to save you, you sarcastic fuck. Ughh, whatever.)

And so, the clinic delver group is finalized...

"Me, Takashi, Kohta, Saeko and the Police officer. Are we good to go?" I ask.

Everybody responds with a nod.

(So, it's not a date with Saeko after all... meh...)

I chuckle under my breath as I glance at Takashi.

"Alright. Takashi." I say as I turn to leave, motioning at him with my hand, Takashi nods and runs up to me.

"Once we are out. I, along with one more person from our group will go to the Humvee to get our guns, and some extra bags." I whisper to him.

"Hmm, are you sure we should take the guns?" He asks.

"As I said, nothing to luck. Asami seems to be getting along with Kohta so I don't think she will rat us out even if she sees the guns." I answer. Takashi turns to look behind him as I speak. Only to see Asami staring intensely at Kohta with big, round starry eyes.

"I think they are more than just 'getting along'." He says as he laughs awkwardly, scratching his cheek.

"Even better then." I say with a shrug.

"Hey, what are you two whispering about?" Kohta asks as he walks up to us.

"How you and the cop make a nice couple." I answer casually.

Kohta's eyes go wide as he bends over and starts choking, his hand over his mouth as his face turns into a Saya approved tomato red. Asami then instantly runs up to Kohta, a worried look on her face.

"What happened! Are you alright Kohta?" Kohta lifts his head. To meet Asami's face, a few centimeters away from his.

"AAAAuahaaAA!" Kohta yelps, and falls on his ass. Asami reacts by also yelping, leaning her body away and pulling her arms back until her hands rested on her shoulders...

I, just kept staring at the two 'lovebirds' for a few seconds, before turning to look at the rest of the group.

Shizuka and Alice were smiling gleefully. Takashi was also smiling, albeit awkwardly. Rei was giggling. Saya had closed her eyes and was shaking her head before turning to look at me with a tilted head, her eyebrows almost making a straight line. Saeko was just staring at me with an, odd expression.

"Aaaanyway. Let's go ah?..."

Do you have an appointment?

"So, you know what you need to get?" I ask as I lean my back against the concrete wall fence, eyeing the clinic's front entrance that was over the road to my right.

"Yea, if it's in there, I'll find it." Kohta responds excitedly as he brandishes the Ar-10 in his arms.

(I can't see any corpses around. Yet, I'll bet my mask that the moment anyone so much as sneezes, shit will pop out from every single direction possible.)

"So, you all ready?" I ask as I turn to look at the group that went along with me to the clinic.

After a short silence, they all responded with a nod. I then move away from the wall, giving the shotgun in my hands a quick glance.

"Still, are you sure it was a good idea, leaving Saya to do that by herself?" Takashi asks as we start moving.

"Saya's smart, she'll figure out how to handle it. Add she would probably try to chew your fingers off, if she could hear you right now." I respond as I chuckle, and turn my sight towards the clinic once again.

-ABOUT AN HOUR AGO.-

I was standing alone by the door that led outside, the same door that we used when we first arrived at the mall. Two corpses on the other side of said door, 'staring' right back at me.

(Hmm. Other than these two chumps, the road behind them is relatively clear. So, the question now is, who do I take with me to the Humvee?

Kohta is too slow, and Asami is ostensibly still part of the other group. Plus, she's stuck on Kohta like glue. Meaning, either Takashi or Saeko.)

"Well you look like a goddamn hooligan now." A female voice cuts me off from my thoughts. Turning around, I see Saya walking next to Takashi, who had an aluminum bat resting on his shoulder.

"At least it's easier to swing." Takashi responds.

"Saya? You going to barricade the door after we leave?" I ask as I tilt my head. Saya then turns to me as she folds her arms.

"You said you wanted to ask something of me, what was it?" She asks plainly.

I nod and lean my body to the side, making sure that nobody was behind them. Seeing me do this, both of them turn around to look at the empty hallway as well.

"I saw an electronics store on the second floor, the other group seemed to have completely ignored it. So, could you check it out? See if there's anything inside that's still functional. Batteries should still work even after the E.M.P blast, so you can use them to check any battery-operated equipment.

Just remember, you're just checking, don't take anything. If you get spotted, say exactly that. And be careful, if things don't look safe, then don't do anything." I fold my arms as I finish speaking. Saya responds by rolling her eyes.

"I'm not a five years old kid, I can handle myself." She says as she tilts her head with an annoyed look.

"I'm not saying that you are Saya, but one of theirs nearly raped Shizuka, I'm just worried about you." I respond as I stare right back at her.

"I, I said I'll be fine! Stop being an idiot..." She retorts as she looks away, her face taking a slight tint of red.

"Then you better not need any rescuing by the time I'm back, I'm an evil overlord. Not a knight." I say in a half-joking manner as I lift both hands in a surrendering motion.

Saya then turns to me with a smirk, her face still slightly red.

"I thought you were a penguin." She responds with a smug look.

"As long as you understand, sure." I replied as I folded my arms. Saya looked slightly, displeased, with my lack of reaction. As she ended up pouting.

"You, uhhh, want me to leave you two alone?" Takashi asks as he looks at the two of us. Saya darts her head to him, and delivers a swift kick to his shin before stomping off.

I turn to look at Takashi as he was hopping about, the leg that Saya just kicked folded in his arms.

"You said that to Saya of all people? You crazy?" I ask as I tilt my head, yet before he could respond...

"Huh what happened here?" A new male voice, turning to it, I see Kohta walking towards us, along with Saeko and Asami.

"He brought forth the wrath of Saya..." I answer as solemnly as I can, glancing at Takashi before turning back to Kohta again.

"Ohh, so that's why she was running like that. But, wait, Asami does not understand. If she was mad, why was she smiling like that?" She asks as she puts her finger next to her mouth.

(Hmm, our resident tsundere made a slip-up ehh?)

"No idea. But in any case, are we all set?" I ask as I shrug and look at the now assembled group, they all nod after looking at each other.

"Alright. So, who knows where the clinic is at?" I ask as I fold my arms.

"Asami used to go there for checkups when she was a kid, she knows how to go there. Oh, and some people from my group are on their way, they will barricade the door again after we leave." Asami replies as she raises her arm like a school child.

"Good, good. Uhh Takashi, Saeko, which one of you will come with me to go get the, failsafes?" I ask as I point my thumb behind me, towards the exit. Saeko tilts her head questionably, while Takashi just nods.

"I'll come." He replies after a short silence.

"Alright, as long as you can run that is." I nod and point at the leg Saya had just kicked.

"I'm fine." Takashi responds as he kicks the air with that leg.

"Alright. So, we have two corpses outside and the doors open towards the inside, so we can't knock them down by kicking the doors in, not that such a loud plan is any good. Hmm, if we have two people open the doors we could have the other two people deal with the corpses. If the corpses somehow get inside during all this, we'll just have to drag them outside afterward. Though, if anybody has a better idea, I'm all ears" I say as I turn to stare at the two corpses on the other side of the door.

And after a short silence...

"I want to try out the bat, so I'm taking out one of them." Takashi speaks up, signaling that we are going with my plan after all.

"I will take the other one then." Saeko adds up.

I nod and move to the door, Kohta following behind me shortly after.

"Alright, on three we'll open the door, use it as a shield and hide behind it." I say as I stare at Kohta, he just nodded with a serious expression.

"One." I tighten my grip on the handle.

"Two." Lightly kick the door to get the corpses' attention.

"Three!" And with a shout, Kohta and I swing the door open.

The moment the doors opened, the two corpses charged inside, only to get knocked down to the ground seconds later.

Saeko stabbed one of the corpses in the face as she lunged forward, killing it instantly.

Takashi also 'stabbed' the other corpse in the face with the tip of the bat, sending it stumbling backward as it fell on its ass. Before it could react in any way, Saeko took a step to the left and with a fluid motion, severed its head.

(Well, that was easy, probably thanks to a certain purple haired samurai.)

As I moved away from the door, I spotted several members from the other group in the far end of the hallway running towards us.

"Go! We'll deal with these two!" Hiro, who was part of the group that just arrived shouted at us. I nod and give the group one last glance before exiting the mall.

The moment we crossed the door, we broke to a sprint as we ran past the field, past the corpses, until we reached the open street.

"Alright Takashi, with me. Asami general direction towards the clinic?" I turn to the cop as I check my surroundings.

"Ohh, umm. Ahh, it's, it's straight to the left from here and then, ummm, two intersections later you go left and then, and then the

next turn you go right and then, and then straight ahead!" She says as her face starts taking an anxious expression, darting her head around frantically as she keeps talking.

"Ok, from here on we'll split up, no point for you to wait here while we go to get the needed supplies. Takashi and I will go straight down from here, we'll meet up midway. Somewhere on, the first intersection you need to turn left, wait for us there.

If it's full of corpses, keep going to the clinic at a slower pace, so we can catch up to you. Same deal if it's us that got there first." I say to the group as I turn around and start walking away, motioning Takashi to follow me with my hand.

Several steps later, I turn around and see Takashi next to me. I then glance at the grouped up corpses in the distance to my left.

(Can't see the cop girl anywhere, not that I can do anything about it with Asami here. And I can't return here after getting the guns as I might get spotted by the ones inside. Lastly, I don't have the time to waste on this now.)

I turn around again and start running down the street, Takashi right in toe.

With the road being wide enough, and the fact that this was the same road that Saeko went full genocide mode, we moved with ease around the few corpses that still occupied the street. After going over the first intersection, we kept moving straight.

"What are we going to take with us?" Takashi asks as he keeps running next to me.

"A shotgun, a rifle, one more handgun and, three bags." I answer as I keep looking down the road.

"Huh, wait, the numbers don't add up." He responds.

"Shotgun for me, I already have a bag, Rifle for Kohta and the first bag, Handgun for you and the second bag. Saeko seems to be allergic to guns and since she'll be using the sword, better if she is not weighed down by a bag. The cop has the gun we gave her, so bag only." I answered as we reached the next intersection.

I slow down and raise my arm to make Takashi stop as well, then look to my right.

(Clear.)

I motion to Takashi with my hand and start running again.

"Allergic to guns?" He asks.

"I tried to give her one, but she avoided it like it was cursed." I answered. Takashi just stayed quiet as we ran up to the tree cluster we stashed the Humvee in.

(Looks clear, but better I don't take any chances)

I pull the bokken from my bag's side straps and start walking towards the trees.

Thankfully no corpses were present there, and more importantly. The Humvee was still there, seemingly untouched.

"Alright, I got the keys. We open the trunk, take what we need and disappear. " I say as I run to the back of the Humvee and lift the net before reaching into my pocket for the keys...

(Uhh what?)

I start frantically looking in all my pockets.

"What's wrong?" Takashi asks as he notices my strange behavior.

"Nothing, just a minor set back... " I answer without turning to him.

(FUCK! Where are they?! Did I leave them in the building? No, I'm sure I did not take them out of my pockets Think, THINK YOU DAMN MORON. Come on, come on. Uhhh, let's see, I took the keys from Shizuka, then I exited the car, then I locked the car. And then I... uhh...)

I dash to the driver's door and lift the net. The keys still there, inside the door..

(Ok Saya, maybe I'm an idiot after all...)

I think as I take the keys out of the door's keyhole and turn to Takashi, then lift them to head high and jiggle them.

"See, just a minor set back." I say as I walk towards the trunk, Takashi just stares at me with a blank look.

"You, forgot them on the door?" He asks as he sighs.

"Yes, yes I did." I answer casually as I open the trunk.

Takashi, while still giving me a weird look, moves closer and looks inside the car. I leaned into the trunk, lifted the second net and picked the two guns before strapping them on me. Takashi grabbed a bag and passed it over his shoulder.

(Right, bag full of clothes.)

I then remove my bag and take all the semi-folded clothes off, leaving them on one of the ammo boxes. Bag clear, I take the second P220 along with the empty magazine out of my bag and turn to Takashi.

I poke him with the magazine to get his attention, he turns to me before taking the gun and magazine with a nod. After that, I pick two more bags, fold them, and shove 'em in my bag.

"Next, ammo for the guns." I say to Takashi as I get inside the trunk and open the red box with the shotgun shells, I grab a couple of

handfuls and toss them in the bag.

(If these go off while I'm running, oh boy. Fun times, not.)

I then open the rifle ammo crate and shove a handful of bullets in the bag as well, along with three filled AR-10 magazines that were left next to the green crate.

(Ok, this should be good enough, let's get going.)

I turn to Takashi to see him staring at me.

"Are you done?" I ask. He just nods and exits the trunk. I do the same, then close and lock it before pulling the net over, after getting the keys this time...

"Alright three guns, three bags and some ammo, let's get out of here." I say as I turn around to leave.

"Naier, do you like Saya?" Takashi asks as I walk past him.

"Uhh, where did that come from?" I ask I turn to look at him.

"Well, the way you two spoke. I have known Saya since I was in kindergarten, and I don't think I have ever seen her listen to anyone like that before." He responds.

(And what does that have to do with whether I like her or not?)

"She probably just understands the situation." I answer back.

"And Saeko as well... " He speaks up again.

(Ohh for fuck's sake dude.)

"The way you rushed to her was..."

"Do 'you' like them?" I cut off Takashi, causing him to freeze.

"I..." He stops mid-sentence as she turns to look to his right.

(Oh for god's sake man. I know that Takashi is somewhat of a sad sack when talking about women, but really now? At least don't start something you can't finish...)

"My answer would probably be similar to yours. Just, exclude Miyamoto from it." I cut him off once more...

"We should keep moving, the last thing the team needs is both of us getting killed here." I say as I turn around and start walking away. Only to turn around again shortly after, and find that our glorious leader was still, still as a statue.

"Come on, the longer we take, the worse it'll get." I point towards the general direction of the mall, Takashi finally nods, and starts walking.

(Should I be worried about getting stabbed in the back now? I mean in the manga and anime he's not that kind of person. But women always make men act in weird ways. Especially when they casually walk around with only a thong and apron on...)

After we got out of the tree cluster, we turned left after taking a quick look around.

"Ok we need to go two intersections straight, then turn left. After that, we keep going straight again, the others should be near that street." I say as I look at the road ahead, bokken in hand.

"We should pay more attention to our surroundings now, all the stuff we took will make us ring like dinner bells." Takashi responds. I turn to him and nod before pushing the two guns towards my back. And like that, we started moving down the road.

And by moving. I mean sprinting like your life depended on it, two intersections were not VERY far in terms of distance, but each step we took caused every single corpse to turn towards our direction.

"Should we use the guns? We could deal with the ones straight ahead, so we don't have to zigzag around the street." Takashi asked as we swerved around the corpses.

"No, remember we just left the mall, shooting the guns right now might arouse suspicion from the survivors that are inside." I say as I keep running.

(Though I must admit, the idea seems very enticing right now.)

Upon reaching the first intersection we climb on the hood of a silver sedan that was in the middle of the street and move to its roof.

"Take a couple of breaths, wait for the nearby corpses to get near the car, then we jump over them or go on from the side of the street that has no corpses." I say as I kneel down and balance myself by placing one hand on the roof.

After a couple of seconds, corpses had indeed gathered on both sides of the car, the hood and trunk were still clear though with only two corpses closing towards the trunk.

"Ok, let's go. Down the hood and then straight to the target road ahead." I turn to Takashi as I speak, to see him nod.

We slide down the windshield and jump off the hood before taking a sharp turn to the left. Then we kept running straight until we reached the next street, where we moved to the center and kept going straight...

Only to be stopped halfway through.

"Uhh, you still don't want to use the guns?" Takashi asks as he looks at a group of kneeled down corpses that were behind two crashed cars, munching on, you know what.

"The corpses are gathered to the left part of the street so, uhh yeah, don't take any chances. Ready your gun, we will go from the right

side and fuck it, shoot any corpses that are in our way. If that group gets a sniff on us, and we are not clear to run. Yeah, get your gun ready." I say as I grab the shotgun by the barrel and bring it to the front, before holding it normally, finger next to the trigger.

I pass the bokken between my back and the bag, then kneel down, put the butt of the gun against my hip and pump it as I keep my hand close to the ejection port.

(One, two, three, four, Four shells.)

I then start loading the shells back into the shotgun before getting up and looking down the sight.

"Right, sight's dead. Still, as long as it knocks them back, I won't complain." I say as I lower the gun and walk to the right part of the street. Takashi following right behind me.

Right now, other than the kneeling corpses, which must have been around, ten? Twelve of them? We also had three corpses on the right side of the road.

I lift the shotgun once again and walk straight towards the first two corpses that were shambling side by side.

"You got the third one after I deal with these two?" I ask as I keep moving towards the three corpses that had now noticed our presence.

"Got you covered." I hear Takashi say from right behind me.

I take several steps forward, to the point that if I extended my arm, the shotgun would touch the corpse's hands. I then pull the trigger.

Both corpses get sent flying back, one having half of its head blown clean off, the other having its shoulder and a small part of its face blasted off. The third corpse that was a little further back did get a couple of pellets in the torso, causing it to jerk its upper body

backward, but remained otherwise unaffected as it kept shambling forward.

Takashi then runs past me, jumps over the two corpses that laid on the floor and took a sideways swing at the third corpse's face with his bat, causing it to stumble to the left before hitting the ground. He then walks over it and starts whacking it on the back of its head, repeatedly.

I take a glance at the grouped up corpses that were now on their feet, slowly turning towards us.

(Ha-ha, no.)

I ran past the two fallen corpses, one of which was actually still moving about, and stopped next to Takashi.

"We got to move! The group is coming after us!" I shout as I turn to glance at the corpses, then walk past Takashi.

He stops beating the ever-living crap of, uh, what used to be a head and turns to me with a nod. It's funny how even after he went ballistic on that corpse, he had no blood on him, not even a single drop. Strange anime physics to the save I guess?

Thankfully, as all the corpses had apparently gathered here, the road ahead was clear. So we just had a straight clean run towards the next intersection.

"And they called 'me' ruthless, I think we need to switch titles here. You turned that corpse's head into a paste." I say as we reach the next intersection and look to the left.

Takashi just shrugged as he chuckled, cleaning the blood off of his bat with his sleeve.

"The intersection where our group is at should be after this road to our left. Let's go." Takashi says as he starts walking. I follow behind

him as I check around the intersection one last time.

Compared to the last two streets, this one could be counted as empty, relatively speaking at least. Whatever corpse that did roam about, had flocked to the left part of the road, leaving the right side safe to traverse.

(Whoever got all these corpses to gather back there must have caused quite the commotion, judging from how everything here tried to get there by flocking at the left part of the road.)

As we kept running down the road I started making out several figures on the intersection that was up ahead.

(Purple hair, orange hair, chubby ball and several bodies laying on the street. Yep that colorful bunch is our group alright.)

Kohta was the first one to notice us. As he started waving his arm high in the air, causing the other two to turn their heads towards our direction.

And once we finally got close, I presented the resident gun nut with his cherished possession.

"Did somebody order guns?" I say as I take off the AR-10 and hand it to Kohta.

"And this should have two bags folded up inside, along with some extra mags and a couple of spare bullets for the rifle." I say as I pull the bokken from its temporary sheath, take the shotgun off and hand my bag to Kohta.

He quickly gets to work as he opens the bag and takes one bag from inside, he then shoves the AR-10 mags and rifle bullets inside it. After that, he takes the second bag and walks up to Asami.

While Kohta was talking with Asami, I turned to look at Takashi to see him. Trying to give the handgun to Saeko? Only for her to

respond by shaking her head and motioning to her sword.

(Did he just try to. Huh, well, looks like you're in the nope squad as well buddy. Still, trying to see if she'll accept yours while she refused mine? Sneaky little shiet you are...)

I hold myself back from chuckling, or thinking too deep into what I just saw, and turn to Kohta.

"Are we ready?" I ask as I kneel down, leaving the shotgun on the ground and start wearing the bag properly.

"As ready as we'll ever be." Kohta replies as he gives the rifle a quick check, with Asami staring intensely at him.

"Uhh, buddy, I think you just mesmerized somebody." I say as I point at the female cop.

Kohta tilts his head and turns towards the staring Asami.

"Are you a secret agent? This cop, Asami is supposed to be a cop, but she can't even understand what you're doing to that gun." She said as she kept staring, her eyes wide open.

Kohta, seeing the opportunity to talk about guns, took it upon himself to, educate Asami. Too bad for the rest of us that is...

PRESENT TIME

"Oh and Kohta, no more gun talk please." I say as I give him a quick glance, he responded by laughing awkwardly.

"Alright, let's go find that plasma." I say to the group as I nod to myself. And with quick steps, I move towards the clinic.

After we reached the front door, I pushed it with the shotgun's muzzle, yet the glass door did not budge. So I grabbed the handle and pulled it towards me next, and the door then opened with no real resistance.

And so, we slowly walked inside, while scanning the insides of the structure for any dangers.

While the building had no lights, I could still see clearly thanks to the sun's rays, as it was still in the middle of the day.

To my left, next to a giant glass wall, I could see an open space that should have been a waiting room. The room, looked horrible. With toppled chairs and ripped manga littering the floor along with spilled drinks, ripped clothes and well, copious amounts of blood.

To my right, about four to five meters from me, I could see a semi-closed wooden door, the words 'staff only' on a metal label that hung on the door. Next to it, after a couple of meters, was a white door and after some more meters away was another white door. Examination rooms if I had to take a guess. In total there were about four of these white doors on the right wall before the wall itself ended.

Opposite of that wall, in other words, next to the waiting room, was what I suspected to be the reception room. The wall that was facing the waiting room had nothing on it, but there was a medium-sized hole in the wall that was facing the white doors, probably the place where the reception greeted people, or gave information, or sold drugs, hell if I know. Next to that hole, I could see two brown doors, and next to these doors I could see wide, single-pane windows, so I doubt these were examination rooms, storage maybe?

Now between the reception and the examination rooms was a corridor, wide enough to fit, two and a half Kohtas?

And on the far end of that corridor, I could see a wall, the corridor splitting to the left and right. The wall on the far end was also made of windows from half side up, so visibility was pretty good over there too.

(I can't see a single corpse, but I know for sure that this place is like a goddamn clown car.)

I raised my hand and motioned for the group to move forward, we walked all the way to the corridor where the reception 'hole' was at.

I looked inside the hole to see that the room behind it was empty, behind the small reception room, I could see another half-open door with the label 'storage' on it.

Kohta was the first one to come up to me, and after he looked at the storage room door he gave me a thumbs up. He then pointed at the right wall inside the reception room, where I could see a single door.

I nodded and looked at the first brown door that was next to the reception then pointed at it before looking at Kohta, to see him nodding as well. With my weapon ready I then moved to the right and looked through the glass window that was next to the brown door.

(This is weird, wasn't this the room that had the first signs of corpses in the manga? It's completely empty though...)

And at that same moment.

'CRASH'

A loud sound echoed to my right, where the rest of the group was at.

I turn my head only to see the door with the 'staff only' label wide open as corpses pour out of it, a lot of them.

(OF-FUCKING-COURSE THIS WOULD HAPPEN! We were not even that much noise! Arghh, fuck it!)

"Back! Fall back! The first door after the reception room leads to the storage room behind the reception!" I shout as I run up to the group and point behind me.

The group quickly runs past me before I take several hops back and turn around, I take off my shotgun and remove my bag before tossing it to Kohta.

"You know what we need, fill my bag as well, I got the shotgun, and it's about time I used it." I say as I turn to the corpses that were slowly getting up, looking towards our direction.

I took several steps forward, before Saeko walked past me. Before she could go on though, I grabbed her arm, causing her to turn to me.

"I will be using the gun, too many, too close, you will get caught in the fire if you charge in, help Kohta. Takashi and I will use our guns to hold off the corpses." I say as I look at her.

She stared at me for a couple of seconds before nodding. She then ran past me and entered the room with Kohta and Asami.

"We just need to hold them away from the door, we can leave from the back windows once we are done." I say as I lift my gun and aim at the corpses.

Takashi nods and aims his handgun, but, does not shoot for some reason.

"I've, never actually fired a gun before... " He says as he looks at the gun in his hand, as if he's not sure how to use it.

"Matters not. Look at them, just aim at their general direction and pull the trigger, you'll hit something. And lastly watch our back." I respond as I close one eye, look down at the dead sight, and pull the trigger. The pellets sending the nearest corpses back as they crashed into the ones behind them.

(I really need to get rid of this sight, it is more cumbersome than helpful right now.)

I grumbled as I pumped a new round into the chamber.

(Five.)

I take a big step forward and point at the nearest corpses before pulling the trigger again, causing even more of them to get sent flying back. How many? I could not tell. Could be five, could be ten for all I know, as with the way they were clustered together shooting one corpse caused three of them to fall down.

I take a step back and pump a new round into the chamber.

(Four)

By now I also noticed that corpses were starting to gather in front of the clinic's entrance.

(They will join the party too huh. We need to hurry.)

I take a step forward again and pull the trigger, causing the wall of corpses to get retracted once more. Takashi was probably getting used to the gun as I heard a couple of shots coming from his direction.

"How much longer!" I shout.

"We are done with the Plasma! We are filling the bags with other stuff now!" I hear Kohta shout back.

"Well hurry it up! They brought friends!" I shout as I pump the shotgun again.

(Three)

And then, the sound of glass breaking.

"Ohh, this is bad... " I say as I lower the shotgun slightly and stare at the corpses coming through the big glass window and into the waiting room.

I quickly lift the shotgun and pull the trigger as I take a step back.

"Alright! Hope you're ready, we are leaving. NOW!" I shout as I turn around and motion to Takashi with my free arm, he nods and turns around as well.

"We are almost done!" Kohta shouts.

"You ARE done!" I shout again as I pump another round.

(Two)

Seconds later I see Kohta exit the storage room, the two girls following behind him shortly after. And once they joined up with us, they turned to stare at the oncoming horde.

"Holy sh..."

"Move, move! The back has only a handful of corpses." I cut Kohta off as I pointed at the four corpses that were by the corridor's split.

I raise my shotgun, aim at the four said corpses pulling the trigger as I keep moving towards them with a steady pace, sending three of them to the ground.

With a pump of the final round I start running towards the last standing corpse. Or at least, that was my initial aim. As the moment the three corpses hit the ground, another corpse walked out from one side of the corridor, then another from the other side, and another, and another, until the corridor looked as bad as the entrance...

"REALLY NOW!?" I shout as I grind to a stop, turn around and run towards the second wooden door to my right. I gave the doorknob a twist, but the door didn't budge.

"Ohh, for fuck's sake..." I groan under my breath as I kick the door, take a step back, then point the shotgun at the window next to it.

(Wait, I got only one shell left, and there's no time to reload...)

I lowered the shotgun and looked at the corpses as they closed in from both sides, I could see the other members of the group shout something as they looked around, but I could not really make out what they were saying.

(Looks like I will have to copy you on this Takashi. This better work, or we're so screwed.)

I raise the shotgun over my head, point at the ceiling and pull the trigger. Seconds later I looked up to see a hole, big enough to fit three of us in at the same time. I let go of the shotgun letting it hang on my side as I put my hands together and bent my knees slightly.

"Kohta! You got up there yesterday!" I shouted as the group turned to stare at me, thankfully, Kohta got the idea pretty fast as he ran up to me and using my hands as a ladder he climbed up, successfully going up to the second floor.

(Ughh, please stop being so fat!)

"Clear!" He shouts seconds later.

"Takashi you are up!" I shout, he nods and proceeds to do the same, also getting up with no real trouble.

"Naier behind you!" Saeko shouts as she steps back from the corpses that were shambling towards us from the entrance. I instantly grab the shotgun and take a blind swing with its butt behind me, hitting a corpse flat on the side of its face.

"Help the girls up! And throw me a damn gun! I'm out!" I shout as I extend my hand towards the hole, taking a few steps back.

Takashi throws his handgun and extra clip to me as he leans his upper body over the hole extending both arms, Kohta following suit shortly after.

"Nakaoka! Grab on quick!" Kohta shouts as he looks at Asami. The cop herself darted her head around.

"No time to think officer, move it!" I say as I grab the gun and let the magazine fall to the ground. I then point the gun at the corpse I just swung at some seconds ago and pull the trigger. After that, I kneel down and pick the second magazine before aiming at the marching corpses once again. In the meantime, Asami used the opening to move ahead of me and grab Kohta's hand.

As they pulled her up, one of the corpses from my side tripped on a fallen body, and 'lunged' forward, grabbing Asami by her shoe with one hand as it face-planted itself to the floor.

"AAAHH! It, it got me! It got me! Get it off! Get it off!" Asami starts screaming as she starts flailing her legs.

I ran to her and shoved the gun's muzzle at the corpse's mouth as it lifted its upper body and reached for the leg it just grabbed, its mouth wide open. I pull the trigger, and grab Asami's leg, pushing her up.

"Saeko you are up next!" I shout as I aim at the corpses once again, and blast off another head.

"You should go first." I heard Saeko say in a calm tone as she stood next to me.

"I have a gun, it's safer for me to hold them off. That was not a request Saeko, You. Go. First." I said as I glanced at her before shooting again, Saeko just stayed quiet.

"Saeko! Take my arm!" Takashi shouts as he appears in the hole again.

"Go! I'll be right behind you." I say as I keep aiming the handgun. Saeko finally sheaths her blade and grabs Takashi's hand, while I shot the gun's last round.

While they pulled her up, I ejected the magazine and shove the second one in the gun, yet before I could even put a new bullet in the chamber. I felt two hands grabbing my shoulders.

(The fuck?!)

I bend my body sideways and 'spin' myself to face the corpse that had its hands on me.

I was instantly met with an open mouth as the corpse pulled me towards it. With barely any leeway, I grabbed it by the neck as I pressed on the gun's slide lock, causing the slide to move forward and load a new bullet in the chamber. I then put the gun between me and the corpse as it slowly brought its face closer to mine.

"Ghh, piss off already!" The corpse jerks its head back and releases me from its grip the moment I pulled the trigger. I then shove it back by slamming my shoulder on it, making it fall on the corpses behind it.

I turn around to see Saeko looking at me with her hand extending from the hole.

"Naier! Take my hand!" Saeko shouts as she leans even more over the hole.

The problem was, that the time it took me to get the corpse off me, let the corpses I was holding off till now, the ones from the back corridor, move past the hole. And the corpses on the opposite side were less than a meter away.

I glance at my gun before darting my head around, my sight stopping at the windows to my right. (Too high, and I need to smash it first. No time to do this normally)

I bend my body forward and run towards the window before turning all the way around and running straight to the opposite wall.

Using my momentum, I run a few steps up the wall, then turn my upper body around and aim the gun at a corpse that was making out with the other side of the window. I pull the trigger two times as I put strength in my legs and spring from the wall, straight towards the now cracked window.

(This better fucking work!)

And, with the sound of shattering glass, I smash through the window and crash into the corpse as it fell backward.

The moment I hit the ground I roll to my right and look at the corpse.

(Bullet to the head. Holy Shit, I can't believe I actually just pulled this off.)

I then look at the rest of the room. One corpse was to my left, a couple of meters away, two straight ahead of me, behind some metal tables that had several bottles on them. And one last corpse was by itself at the far left end of the room.

"NAIER!? NAIER!" I hear a female voice scream seconds later.

"I'm fine! Get going! I'll find another way out!" I shout as I get up and aim at the corpse to my left before putting a hole right between its eyes.

Then I turned to the other two corpses to see them walking towards me as they dragged along the tables that were in front of them, and proceeded to give both of them a third eye before turning to look at the window that I just smashed through. The only thing I could see, was hands sticking out of it, thankfully though they didn't seem to be able to get inside.

I nod and turn around before aiming at the last corpse as it shambled towards me. And one gunshot later, the room was clear. I then take the magazine off and look at it.

(Two bullets left...)

I put the gun into a pocket as I turned to look at the windows again.

"Yeah not getting out that way. Hmm..." I turned my head and looked at the other end of the room. I could see several windows that led outside, and I could not see any corpses on the other side either.

"Yeah that could work." I say as I start walking towards the windows. Yet, I did not go too far before I heard, more shouting..

"Saeko? Saeko! What are you doing!?" I hear a male voice shout.

I dart my head around only to see a pair of legs in black boots and stocking going over in an ark towards the smashed window.

Saeko, went over the corpses and landed in the room I was in, but. Not far enough. A couple of hands managing to grab her school shirt from behind.

"The Hell?!" I shout as I dash towards her. And as they were about to jerk her backward, she stabbed her sheathed sword against the wall behind her in order to stop herself from getting pulled back.

The moment I got close to her, I hugged her by passing my right hand behind her neck. I then lift my right leg and stomp against the wall, hard. The moment I managed to stabilize myself I looked at the hands that had taken hold of the shirt.

I followed the pair of hands with my eyes until I could see who the owner was. Then I pass the handgun over Saeko's shoulder with my left hand and shoot the corpse straight in the face. At that distance, I couldn't miss, even without aiming. I then did the same thing again for the other pair of hands. And the moment the second corpse let go, we stumbled a few steps backward as Saeko was freed.

"Saeko! Are you alright?!" The same male voice could still be heard from inside the hole.

"We're both fine! Now get going before I plug that damn hole!" I shout again.

After a short silence I hear a reply.

"A, alright, be careful. You remember the way back to the mall?" The same voice responds.

"Yeah! Now get the fuck out of here already!" I shout back again, and then, silence.

"Ummm, Naier." I hear a female right voice next to me. I looked down to see that I was still hugging Saeko. I let her go, and stare at her.

"You alright? No bites?" I ask as I look at her, with no small amount of dread.

She gives herself a quick pat-down before nodding, all the time without looking at me. I take several steps back before sitting on a table with a silent sigh.

"Alright, Saeko. What the fuck was that?" I ask, and Saeko finally looks at me. She stayed quiet for some time, seemingly thinking of what to say.

"What do you mean?" She responds with a question.

"You know very well what I mean. You nearly killed yourself with that stunt you just pulled." I say as I point my hand at the window.

She stayed quiet as she averted her gaze.

"It was nothing..." She responds in a low tone.

"Nothing? Saeko you nearly killed yourself..." I say as I narrow my eyes.

"And what does it matter..." She responds in a low tone again.

"The what?" I ask as I tilt my head.

(She didn't just say what I thought she said, right?)

"I NEARLY CHOPPED YOUR HEAD OFF!" She screams at me as she turns her head to me, her eyes going wide as she leans forward.

(Does she mean at the mall?...)

"No, you accidentally, nearly chopped my head off." I responded.

"And what is the difference! Were you not fast enough. I, I would not have even realized what I did until it was already too late!" She shouts back at me.

"You wanted to kill me?" I ask bluntly.

"What! No! I..."

"Then, that's all I care about." I cut her off.

She stops shouting and just stares at me for several seconds before looking away. And a couple of minutes passed with me staring at Saeko and Saeko looking away.

"I, don't deserve... " She responds in a low tone.

"You don't deserve? Deserve what?" I repeat her words.

"I don't deserve this kindness..." She replies.

"Why?" I ask as I lean forward. She grabs the collar of her shirt as she keeps looking away from me.

"I, I'm not who you think I am..." She replies. And after another short silence, she takes a deep breath.

"If, you are willing to listen, then. Let me tell you, about me." She adds with a much calmer tone.

"Four years ago. I was walking alone at night, returning from my kendo practice. I, got attacked by a man. But I had my bokken with me, so I was able to defend myself." She stops talking as she turns to look at me.

"I ended up breaking his shoulder blade and femur... " She adds.

"And I enjoyed it... " She continues with a meek voice.

"I enjoyed inflicting pain on him! Making him suffer!" Only to end up shouting right after.

"I kept attacking him not because he tried to force himself on me, but because I liked it. I felt exhilarated as I watched him writhe in agony!" She keeps leaning towards me as she shouts.

"I am, nothing but a monster!" She turns her head away again and tightens the grip on her collar.

I take a deep breath as I close my eyes and get off the table.

"Ok. Then, let me rephrase my last statement." I say as I walk closer to her.

"As long as you stay on my side, and don't turn your blade against me. I won't care." I say as I look at her.

Saeko turns to face me with a perplexed expression.

"Why, why do you insist on being this kind to me?" She asks.

"Because, I'm the one who gets to decide who I want to be kind to, not you. And sadly for you, you've picked one of the short straws on the matter." I say as I place my hand on the top of her head.

Saeko just lowered her head slightly. And in a quick motion, she leaned forward until she ended up with her head on my chest, one of her hands grabbed on my jacket.

"I am sorry, my knees, buckled..." She says as she keeps her head lowered. I just patted her head before I passed one arm around her back.

With her still holding on to me, I take a few steps back, dragging her along before leaning on the table behind me. I lowered my head until my chin touched her head and gave the corpses behind the windowed wall one last glance before closing my eyes.

I do not know how long we stayed like that, but it must have been for quite some time, as my legs were starting to get numb.

"I can't promise you that I will make your life any better. But, I can promise you that as long as you stay with me, I will stay with you. Also, on a second note. Uhh, it's not that I don't like this but, uhh, if you keep grinding on me like that. We are going to have an 'accident' on our hands." I say as I open my eyes and dart them around without moving my head.

"And, you don't want to?" She responds as she passes her arms around my sides and to my back.

The realization of what Saeko just told me came with a short delay, but. Instead of freaking out, or you know, having another sort of 'reaction'. I could not shake off that feeling of guilt...

(I would expect myself to be panicking right now. But, why do I just feel like shit instead?)

"You, you are mentally overloaded right now. I, must not take advantage of the situation..." I say as I look away.

"Hmm? But I thought that you were an evil overlord? Shouldn't you be trying to take advantage of situations like these." She responds as she turns to face me, a rather sly expression on her face.

"You're really trying to put me in a corner here ain't you? And I thought I was supposed to be a penguin..." I say as I keep looking

away. Saeko stares at me for a moment...

"Is it because of Saya?" She asks right after, causing me to dart my head to her.

"The who what now?" I ask as I feel cold sweat run on the back of my neck.

"You said that I picked 'one of the short straws'. So that means there should be somebody who picked another, and she is the only other girl you really interact with. Plus, the way you acted at the manor. You seem to at least care for her." She says as she stares at me. I take a deep breath and close my eyes.

(I could easily deny it. It's as easy as saying no, but. That would be a flat-out lie. And maybe this is why I feel like crap right now. Because I also like Saya...)

"Nobody said that I was a shining beacon of morality... " I say sheepishly as I open my eyes and look at the corpses over the window, who seemed to have given up on trying to get in and were just standing there now.

Saeko responded by tightening her grip on me and lowering her head. And several minutes passed in silence once again.

"Your promise to me. Are you going to keep it?" Saeko asks as she lifts her head to look at me again. Glancing back at Saeko, I could see her staring intently at me.

I look away for a couple of seconds before bringing my hand to my mask. I then take it off along with the balaclava and turn to her.

(No hiding behind a mask for this, it's sink or swim.)

"I want you with me Saeko, that won't change." I said as I stared right into her eyes.

She responded by putting one of her hands to my shoulder and lifting herself up, bringing her face closer to mine. To the point that all I could see was her face.

"But what if Saya..."

"No matter what happens with Saya, I will still want you with me." I cut her off.

Saeko responded by tightening her grip on my shoulder as she moved her face closer... And then neither of us spoke. We couldn't speak, even if we wanted to.

Return to the mall

Saeko was checking around the room. Apparently, this place was also some sort of storage room, as she found a couple of small piles of several types of medicine. Shame we had no bags with us, so we could not really take anything. Not that it mattered much for me at the moment, because I was uhh...

(Did that just, really happen? Maybe I actually passed out after I crashed into the window, and a corpse is actually chewing on my face right now...)

I take a quick glance at Saeko before lifting my hand to my face, and give it a strong pinch.

(Ow, F... Yep, definitely not dreaming. So that means...)

I shake my head, put my balaclava and mask back on, and then jump off the table.

(ARGHH. Come on you retard, no time to be a little fucking princess. You got shit that needs doing, you can be all flabbergasted later.)

"Naier, it seems that there are not any of them wandering on the other side of these windows. I think we can leave from here." Saeko speaks up as she checks the windows on the far end of the room for the, fourth time?

"Yeah, but first, I need to find some kind of weapon. I'm almost out of bullets, only two rounds left in the handgun, and I'm all out of shotgun shells. Wonder if there's anything in here that I can use to poke corpses to death..." I respond as I walk up to her while looking around.

"I don't know if you will find anything useful. I searched around the room and saw nothing that could be used as a weapon. All the drawers that are on the right side have bottles and other types of

medicine. The rest of the room has nothing even worth mentioning. And lastly, the corpses were unarmed." She replies as she turns around and scans the insides of the room we're in again.

"Ok. So, then..."

"Don't worry. I will deal with anything that will try to get in our way." She cuts me off as she turns to me and smiles.

"I can't just sit back and let you do all the work now, can I?" I answer as I look at her.

"But. You can rely on me. I want you, to rely on me." Saeko responds as she turns her sight towards the window.

I raise my hand towards my head and point at the ceiling as I open my mouth. But, I couldn't really think of anything to say.

"And how am I supposed to reply to something like that?" I ask as I let my hand drop.

Saeko just closes her eyes and laughs lightly through her nose before turning to me. She looked much happier now, as if a weight had fallen off her shoulders.

"Fine, until I find something, I'll stay behind you." I add as I fold my arms. Saeko responded with a nod, and a smile.

"So, let's get out of here?" I 'ask' as I give the other side of the window one last check.

With a nod from Saeko, I then jump over to the grassy ground on the other side.

Straight ahead of me, was now a concrete fence wall. To my left, I could see the road that connected to the front part of the clinic. To the right, a path that led to the back of the building. Another road was visible there, after what seemed to be, a small park? Behind me, the window I just exited, and Saeko.

"We need to go left if we want to go back on the road we used to arrive. The front door was definitely overrun with corpses, so going that general direction is probably a bad idea. But lets at least check how bad it is, if it's too much, we have to go out from the back." I speak up in a low tone as I turn to Saeko.

She nods and starts walking towards the front, her hand resting on her Katana.

And, we didn't actually have to reach the end of the path to start hearing corpse moans. And the moment we did reach the end...

"Yeah, no. Judging just from how many corpses are flocking around the road we need to take? I'll take it that our group was not very stealthy after leaving. It's not just the front entrance that's overcrowded right now." I whisper as I look at the road that was overrunning with corpses...

"We go from the back then?" Saeko whispers without turning to look at me.

"Yeah, probably." I answer as I pat her shoulder and turn around.

We then walked back all the way to the other side of the clinic. Upon reaching the end, we again checked the road in front of us.

"There are a bunch of corpses that seem to be crawling towards the clinic, probably drawn by the noise we made. They're quite spread out though, and they're all still in the small, uhh, park? What do you call it? It has no trees whatsoever, with just a grassy field and some paved walkways. Also see a couple of cars near the edge of the park." I speak up as I scan the area ahead of us.

"Still, we should be able to run past the corpses, and the road behind them looks clear. Huh, I honestly expected more corpses to be around, but, ehh I'm not complaining." I add as I stare at the corpses that kept shambling towards the clinic.

"After we run past them and reach the street, what then?" Saeko asks as she turns to me.

"Hmmm, we need to turn either left or right, then make another turn on the next intersection, so we can end up going in the opposite direction from where we're going now. The mall is more or less a straight line from the clinic." I answer as I turn to her, she replies with a nod.

And so, after we spend a couple of seconds looking at each other, until it started to get a bit, awkward. We slowly sneaked out of the 'corridor' and started walking towards the small park.

I then also realized why there were not so many corpses walking towards the clinic, or at the street behind them. There was a crapon of them already clawing at the clinic's back wall. Thankfully, they were fairly far away and didn't seem to pay any attention to us. I give Saeko a glance and motion her with my hand before breaking off into a sprint.

We then bolted forward and headed straight towards the road ahead. With Saeko quickly running past me, and effortlessly cut down a couple of spread-out corpses that were in our way...

(I feel like I'm playing a game with cheat codes with her around...)

I chuckle to myself as I run past the fallen corpses, the various abandoned cars and head into the street, where Saeko was waiting for me.

"Left or right?" I ask as I reach her.

"I do not think your plan is going to work Naier." Saeko responds calmly as she turns to me.

"Huh, why? What is the... oh, crabs." My own question got answered the moment I looked at the streets to my left, and right...

Other than that they were both crawling with corpses? A butt-load of crashed, abandoned cars on both streets that would severely limit our mobility. Something that's too much of a danger for my liking...

"The road ahead is clear. Though it seems to be an uphill road, so I can't really tell what might be beyond it." I speak as I look behind Saeko, pointing behind her.

"We do not have much of a choice, do we?" She responds as she tilts her head slightly. I nod.

"Alright, same deal, we go straight ahead, then left or right on the next intersection." I add as I start running, Saeko turning to run next to me.

And so, we both start running up the hill. Which was, well, empty.

(Guess all the corpses got drawn to the clinic.)

The moment we reached the next intersection, which was actually on the top of the hill, the first thing I noticed, was the sea. The ocean was actually straight ahead of us, beyond a now downhill road. Which, was the only positive thing I could see, as everywhere else, looked like shit.

"Ohh come on..." I groan as I look at the toppled big rig that was blocking the right road. Now the road to the left 'was' clear. But...

"I can see the next intersection on the end of the left road. It is..."

"A clusterfuck, I can see it." I cut Saeko off as I look at the distant intersection on the left. I guess that's why the road was clear too. Everything must have gathered at that intersection.

But really, crashed cars, corpses, toppled poles, smoke. That intersection had it all.

"Uhh. So, Saeko, how about a seaside walk?" I 'ask' as I glance at Saeko, before turning towards the road ahead.

It was a straight line towards the street that was next to the beach, about two intersections ahead. The road did have a couple of corpses roaming about, but nothing like the fuck fest that was waiting on the left intersection.

"I did not take you for the romantic type Naier." Saeko responds with a slight smirk.

"Normally, I would now say something in the likes of 'stick around, I'm full of surprises'. But yeah, I'm really not." I answer as I tilt my head and turn to Saeko. She just chuckled in response.

"Well I do not see any other way we could go, so..." She adds as she looks at the road ahead. I nod, and we start moving again.

(We keep going further and further from the mall. But, I'm not complaining. Not when I have Saeko with me.)

"After we reach the road by the sea, we go right. Since the left intersection was a visible hellscape." I say as I keep running.

"And if the right side is a no-go too?" Saeko asks.

"We keep going till we find a clear one." I respond without looking at her...

And so, a couple of tumbling corpses later, we reached the seaside road and turned right. And instantly stopped.

"You know what. I'm not even surprised anymore." I groan as I raise both arms and look at the corpses that had blocked off the street.

"The beach looks empty." Saeko responds as she looks at the beach that was below us to our left.

"Yeah, I can see a couple of stairs a little further off, we go down the beach, walk past the grouped up corpses, then we walk back up to the street again." I add as I point at a staircase that was a couple of meters away ahead of us.

With that, we run to the stairs and pretty much jump down before running straight towards the sea.

After we picked up some distance from the street I stopped and looked around, then turned to Saeko.

"I can't see a single corpse on the beach. Guess nobody thought of running here?" I nod as I turn to look at the clogged road behind her.

"Works perfectly for us, does it not?" she responds.

"Yeah. Come on, better we don't get any attention now, I don't feel like running on sand." I chuckle as I motion her with my hand and turn to walk towards the left. Saeko nodded and started walking next to me...

We then walked in silence for a few minutes, before said silence became a bit, 'too' boring...

"In the end, we ended up on a seaside walk after all." I chuckle, Saeko responds with a giggle.

"Still, I never realized we were this close to the sea." I turn to look at the calm ocean to my left as I continue speaking.

"Me neither." Saeko responds. I turn to her and tilt my head.

"Really? Are you not from around here?" I ask, Saeko shakes her head after hearing my question.

"No. And, between my studies and my training. I did not have much free time to take leisure walks." She responds.

"Hmm. I guess we would all still be in our own little worlds, was it not for the outbreak." I add as I turn to look at the sea again.

(And my world, would probably be a prison, or at the bottom of a pier with concrete shoes.)

"Our, worlds... " Saeko lowered her head slightly as she spoke.

"If, you do not mind me asking Naier, what did you usually do before the outbreak? Helping people film their guns aside... " She asked as she lifted her head towards me.

"I'm not sure that you would want to know. Trust me, my daily life was very boring." I respond as I turn to her, she just kept staring at me with that 'tell me' expression.

And after she kept staring at me for a couple of seconds. I capitulated.

"Other than the gun thing and occasionally exercising? I, uhh, stayed home and played video games. That's it." I answer as I tilt my head, Saeko just kept looking at me, seemingly thinking of what to say.

(Well, that's what I did before I arrived 'here'. So I guess it's not technically a lie? I didn't really have the spare time for gaming after I realized where I was...)

"In the end, it took a zombie outbreak to make me leave my room and talk to people." I add as I laugh through my teeth, Saeko just smiles as she closes her eyes and laughs lightly through her nose.

"So, you did not go out much?" She asks.

"Much? Let's just say that if I didn't have a reason to leave the house, I didn't leave the house." I answer. Saeko just looked at me without responding.

"Disappointed?" I ask. Saeko snaps out of what she was thinking, she then shakes her head as she lifts her hand and shakes it as well.

"Ohh, no no. I just, did not expect you to be an indoors type... " She replies.

"Well I am, was, am? Can't really tell anymore... " I tilt my head from left to right as I speak.

We then kept silent for a couple of minutes as we walked down the empty beach, the corpses on the road to our right staying ever oblivious.

"It's funny you know. If this didn't happen, I would probably have never met any of you." I speak up as I keep walking. Saeko just glances at me before looking at the ground.

"Y, yeah..." Was all she said, her eyes still looking at her feet. I glance at her. And take a big breath.

(And I just fucked the mood. Good job me. Time for the best method in saving a subject. Joke about it like a retard.)

"I mean, just think about it. Saeko Busujima, esteemed Kendo club leader and winner of the Kyoto Kendo Tournament caught kissing with a shut-in whose surname is pronounced wrong by half the school staff." I say as I try to sound as dramatic as I can. And hold my back my laughter, raising both arms and spreading them like I was showing off a billboard.

Saeko lifts her head and looks at me with a raised eyebrow, until. I looked away from her, a bit too earnest-looking eyes.

"Khh. Sorry, sorry. I know it's not really something I should joke about. But, you looked down in the dumps, and I couldn't think of anything better." I add as I turn to look at her.

She says nothing. Just, looks at me and smiles. Then she moves closer and passes her arm around mine, locking it between her arm and, uhh, breast.

I decided to just keep my mouth shut, as I had a feeling that anything I might have said now, would have ended up, ruining the mood, or with a trap question...

(I could tell her that I killed Shido and Tsunoda. But I don't want her to believe that I only accepted her because I've done worse. I would

still have accepted her no matter the case. The fact that I killed those two had nothing to do with this.)

We kept moving down the beach like that for some time...

(We have already moved past a couple of intersections. But, uhh, Saeko's not complaining, and I sure as hell do not mind taking the, long way around right now.)

And as we kept walking, I spotted an actual change in the distance, a house by the top part of the beach...

I could also see a path that went all the way to the sea from it, the path ending with what seemed to be a small cement dock. The house itself was surrounded by a tall fence too.

"That house in the distance, with the small dock. If it's clear let's take a break there before we go back into running in the streets." I speak up as I point at it with my free hand. Saeko nods as she looks at where I was pointing.

As the beach was clear, reaching said house did not really take much effort. And once near, we headed to check the back gate that led into the house.

"Locked, and I don't see any corpses inside," I say as I try the door, and look into the house's backyard.

"Think there are survivors inside?" She asks as she looks at the closed windows, curtains obstructing the view inside. Letting of my arms in the process.

"If there are, they're doing a terrible job at fortifying this place." I respond as I pass my arm between the steel pickets and press on the gate's handle. The gate then opened effortlessly.

I walk inside, and motion Saeko to come with my head. The moment she walked in, I closed the gate and pulled the handgun.

"Let's do a quick sweep around the house's yard, then check the insides." I whisper as I lift the handgun.

I then moved straight ahead towards the right side of the house. While Saeko went to the left to check the other side.

(This place has its own garage. This could be a perfect place to stash the Humvee if it's clear.)

I think as I keep moving. Upon reaching the front side of the yard, I head to the front gate.

(Locked. Good thing too, the front road of the house has corpses roaming about.)

Then at the front fence door.

(Also locked...)

By the time I was done with the doors, Saeko had also reached the front yard. And upon turning towards her, she nodded at me. I then turned to look at the house's main entrance.

(Huh? The door's half-open...)

I point at the door as I look at Saeko, she nods again and starts moving towards it. With my gun pointed at the door, I also started to move...

After we climbed the front porch stairs and reached the door, I gave it a light kick and moved aside.

Yet, nothing happened. And after peeking inside, I found that it looked as clear as it could be. From here at least. As the only thing I could see was a small opening, that then led to an open room that had a big table set in the middle. I give Saeko a quick glance, and with a nod, we move into the house.

The moment we stepped in, I scanned the insides.

To my left, a couple of meters away, I could see a door under a big widescreen TV, probably leading to the garage. In front of me, in what I assume is the living room, a big table. A few meters behind it, closed curtains and a relatively big sliding glass door. To my right, I could see an open wall kitchen, in the far end of the room. Next to it was a staircase, followed by a wall that ran all the way to where I was standing. That wall also had one door in it, along with several painting portraits.

"Whoever was here, wasn't short on cash." I whisper as I look around the room.

(There's no sign of struggle anywhere, guess they left when shit hit the fan?)

"I will go check the upper floor." Saeko whispers shortly after as she starts to move towards the staircase.

"I will check the two doors on the first floor, then join up with you. Be careful." I responded. And with that, we split up.

(I know she can handle herself. But, uhh, yeah I'm worried. Hope she won't do anything stupid from now on. God, if I start getting clingy now. Ughh, everything with moderation, everything with moderation.)

I shake my head and head to the door that was to my left, under the giant TV. Opening the door, I find myself in the garage.

Other than a small workstation that had various tools on it to my left, there were two things that caught my attention. A big ass jeep, and a wooden boat.

The jeep looked like a silver Maserati Levante, shaded windows and all. So I guess I was right, these people must have been loaded. Which made it all the weirder as the boat was a small wooden one, no engine, just paddles. It was well-preserved and on a trailer that was linked up to the car.

(What's with the boat? If the people here were decked I would expect that they at least had a zodiac not a wooden boat...)

My thoughts then got interrupted by the sound of something 'bumping' into the car. I instantly aim my gun at the car and stare at it. After staring for a while, and seeing nothing. I kneel down and check under the car.

(Clear.)

I then get up again and scan the garage...

(Hmm...)

"Uhhh. Mantis drops organic polymer!" I speak up, the last part with a relatively loud voice. And seconds later, another bump, coming straight from inside the car.

I walk closer to the car and try to see inside, only to see my reflection on the tinted windows again.

"Fucking tinted windows, ain't that supposed to be illegal or something? Really pinging that 'criminal' meter here. I dub thee, Yakuza family..." I groan under my breath as I move to the front of the car...

Thankfully, the front windshield was not shaded, so I had a clear view of the insides now.

"Well. that explains the bumping." I say as I look at the zombified people in the car.

A well-dressed man in a suit and a woman in a nightdress were on the front seats, both corpses. The man, who was in the driver's seat, had a small part of his neck missing, on the right part. While the woman had a small bite mark on her left arm. And, I could see a small kid on the back, shuffling about. Next to it, the remains of another kid?

"Guess being rich ain't gonna help ya, if your own kid comes after you." I whisper as I move towards the boat, lowering the gun.

"Still, why a wooden boat people? At least get something bigger, aren't you guys rich?" I add as I glance at the Jeep's trunk. Obviously, I got no response, other than even more bumping.

I then leave the garage, closing the door behind me.

"Next, the door next to the stairs. I don't think the corpses in the car can get out, and if they can. They still will be locked inside the garage." I say to myself as I pass by the giant table in the living room.

Upon reaching the door, I ready my gun again and grab the handle. I then swing the door open and make a quick jump back, pointing the gun towards the open door.

(Empty. Expected as much. But not being careful is equal to suicide, I'd rather look like an idiot and stay alive.)

Still, I did take a quick glance around me to make sure Saeko did not come back down before moving into the room.

The room, well it looked like a study. I could see an expensive-looking desk on the far end of the room to my left. The wall ahead of me was made up of windows, with the curtains all closed. And the wall adjacent to the door was made of a long bookcase, filled with books.

I walk up to the bookcase and pick a book, the sign of the medical cross on it. I then put it back and picked another. A medical book again. I repeated the process a couple of times, to the same result.

(Hmm, one of those two corpses back there was a doctor?)

I think as I leave the book in my hands on a stand next to me. I then look at the room again, my eyes stopping on a wooden door behind

the desk.

Walking up to the door I again grab the handle and ready the gun. Swinging the door open I sidestep while moving backward, and stare at the insides of the new room.

(Ehhh, it's only a bathroom. Well, it could have some medical stuff, but we just looted a shit ton of that crap in the clinic. And again, carrying shit while trying to dodge zombies? A bad idea.)

I shake my head and turn around, giving the room one last glance before leaving.

Upon returning to the living room, I move towards the stairs to my right. Going up the stairs I found myself in a rather big corridor with five doors, two doors on each wall to my left and right and one door straight ahead, three of the doors, were open. I walked to the furthest open door that was to my right and peek inside. Saeko was there, looking at dresses that were inside a wardrobe.

"Umm, Saeko? I think monsters usually hide under the bed." I speak up as I point at the double bed next to Saeko.

Reacting to my voice, she closes the wardrobe and turns to me.

"These people must have been pretty wealthy. Everything in here is rather expensive." She responds.

"Ohh, I know. You must see their car, could give our Humvee a run for its money in terms of price. Didn't save them though." I nod as I turn to look back towards the stairs. Saeko stayed quiet for a couple of seconds.

"You found the owner of the house?" She asks.

"Yea, inside the car, corpsified. Think one of their kids got infected, and then turned inside the car." I answer as I turn to her again. She responded by staying quiet.

"I also found a small wooden boat." I add up.

"Small wooden boat? Are you sure it was theirs? They don't look like people to have such a thing." She asks again.

"Yeah, don't ask me. Maybe they liked passing their time rowing the sea in a dinghy boat like the rest of us plain people." I answer as I shrug, Saeko responds with a chuckle.

"Normal people row the seas in dinghy boats? I didn't know that." She responds as she tilts her head slightly with a smile.

"Ehh, probably? Never rowed a boat in my life. Come on, let's check the last two rooms." I chuckle as I turn around, Saeko nods and follows behind me.

The next room ahead of us was a kid's room. And honestly, I could not tell if it was for a boy or a girl. It looked, plain, no toys whatsoever. It did have an expensive-looking computer and another double-sized bed though. Shame the computer no longer worked, must have been quite the beast.

The last room? Turned out to be another plain-looking bathroom.

"Well I think we're in the clear." I stretch one arm as I walk towards the stairs.

"Yes, the house seems clear. So, do we stay here for some time?" Saeko asks.

"Taking a break sounds nice, and I want to check the study again, it was full of medical books. Might find something helpful." I nod as I look back at Saeko.

Yet before either of us could react, I heard a loud growl, coming from my stomach. Reminding me that I have not eaten for well, quite sometime now. Saeko just stared at me.

"I'm going to the study... " I add as I quickly turn around and walk down the stairs.

(Jeez, thanks body, next time ruin the moment by making other weird fucking noises.)

As a response, my stomach made another low growl.

(Maybe I should check the kitchen for something before checking the study. The truth is I have not eaten for a day or so....)

And so, I went to the first floor, stormed the kitchen and stole two carrots. Yeah, carrots, and then headed back to the study.

-Half an hour later-

(Hmm, interesting.)

I slowly bit down on the second carrot as I leaned my back on the expensive, boss-style chair.

(Indeed, very interesting. This is the sixth book I tried to read, and I still don't understand jack shit...) I shut the book, and lean back on the chair.

(But they could be helpful for Shizuka. Hmm, I should check for a bag, gamble for it and take the ones that looks the most fancy.)

I get up and throw the two carrot stumps in the trash bin that was next to the desk.

(Yeah, let's do that, the jeep in the garage might have bags in the trunk. Mister and Miss Yakuza seemed to be ready to bail the house before tragedy struck.)

Yet, the moment I opened the study's door. Something else caught my attention, and nose. I was smelling cooked, meat?

(The hell? Am I going delirious? Didn't realize that I was THAT hungry.)

But I soon realized I was not smelling things. Saeko was in the kitchen, in what I suspect was a male, long-sleeved, buttoned shirt. Her hair tied up to a ponytail as she stood over a gas-operated stove. On the table behind her two dishes laid side by side, I could already see some cut vegetables on the plates.

Probably hearing the door closing behind me, Saeko turns to me.

"Food is almost ready, you might want to take off your gloves and jacket. And the mask. Or you can somehow pass things through it?" She asks with a smile.

"Huh... what. Who, what... uuuuhh?" I tilted my head in confusion as my mouth did its best expression of a caveman. Saeko just giggled.

"The fridge here is pretty good, everything inside was still cold, and I found this gas cooker in a shelf. Soo... " She turns her head back to the cooker, looking at the sizzling meat on the pan. I, just scratched my mask.

(Well, she did find out that I was hungry. But still, I'm moved.)

"Uhh, ok. But, why are you wearing, that?" I ask as I keep staring at Saeko...

"Hmm, my clothes were a little dirty, so I tossed a shirt over them. That way I would not get anything on the food by accident." She responds.

"Makes sense. Well uhh, I'll check the garage for something then go to the bathroom." I say as I turn around and head toward the garage.

The moment I got inside, I went to the trunk of the car and tried my best opening it, the trunk did not budge though.

"Huh, figures. Gonna need the keys, or breaking the glass." I speak to myself as I look at the tool rack.

On it, I could see several screwdrivers, some saws, a blowtorch and a crowbar. The last two things seemed, interesting. The blowtorch could easily start fires, the crowbar? Let's just say that I had corpses that needed dealing with. And all crowbars, are Gordon freeman approved.

I grab the crowbar and go to the front door, then give it a knock.

"Sir, do you know how fast you were going?" I say with a serious tone as I look at the window. As I could not see inside, I waited for a bit, until I heard something bumping against said window.

"I would like you to get out of the car and walk in a straight line sir." I pull the door's handle, and using it as cover, I quickly open it while staying behind it.

The corpse man almost jumps out of the car, and lands on the floor with a growl. I quickly close the door and walk up to the corpse.

"Nope, that ain't walking, sir." I bring the straight point of the crowbar down on the back part of the corpse's head, before pulling it back out and leaving it, on the tool table.

"Ok, that's over, keys." I say as I turn around, then open the door again and take a step back.

Inside, the woman was trying to reach me, her hands extending towards me. The seatbelt was stopping her though. The little one on the back seat was also trying to get to me from the gap between the driver's seat and the driver's door frame. Though, only one of its little hands was sticking out.

I grab the small hand and pull it before slamming the door shut. A loud crack, and the hand got bent in a direction it normally should not.

"Sorry bout that." I say as I open the door again and take the keys out of the ignition switch.

The moment I turned around, the door that led to the living room swung open, Saeko barging in, sword in hand.

"What happened?! Are you alright?" She asks, or well, shouts as she looks at me. Before looking at the corpse on the floor, then at the dangling hand next to the driver's seat, and then back at me.

"I needed the keys? Oh, and I found a weapon." I say as I lift the key and jiggle them with one hand and point the crowbar with the other. Saeko just sighs as she lowers her head before looking back at me.

"You scared me." She responded as she stared at me.

"Sorry..." Was all I said as I moved away from the door, Saeko just kept looking at me.

"Saeko. I made a promise to you, didn't I? I won't be going anywhere for as long as you need me. And a man must never go back on his word, right?" I add as I walk to the trunk, and turn to look at her.

Saeko's eyes went slightly wide as she stared at me before, smiling and turning around.

"Sweet talker." Was all she said before leaving the garage, closing the door behind her.

(Am I? But I really meant it though...)

I think as I open the trunk, and my brain instantly told me that I had to focus on what I was seeing.

"Holy crabs, these people were, prepared..." I think as I take the bags out of the trunk, then close it, so I would not end up having a second on meeting with the small corpse.

"Let's see. Two hiking backpacks and three large duffle bags." I kneel down as I speak and open the first duffle bag.

Clothes, jewelry, high heel shoes, make up, and some uhh. pink proof that the husband did not pay enough attention to somebody on the bed.

"Really? My disappointment is immense and my day is ruined." I groan as I keep searching the bag, but in the end, I found nothing. Nothing that I needed at least.

I grab the duffle bag and toss it aside, then open the second one.

This bag had books, some tools like scalpels inside another, smaller bag. And other medical equipment like disinfectants and such.

"Hmm if the doctor decided to take these books, then they must be the good ones... right?" I take the bag and push it to the side, in the opposite direction of the bag I tossed before, and then open the last duffle bag.

This one, had a good amount of gas canisters inside, along with what seemed to be a gas stove with three burners.

"Ohhh! Now this is something." I say to myself as I keep looking inside.

And soon, I also found another treasure in there.

"Ohhh, wait a minute. This looks like that expensive Canadian water filter I found in the net before the outbreak. It costed like, five hundred dollars? Supposedly, it was designed for military use. Talk about a lucky break." I broke into a grin as I shoved the bulky cylinder back into the bag with the gas canisters and pushed it next to the bag with the medical equipment.

The two hiking bags did not have anything worthy of note. Or well, they had a couple of bottles of water treatment pills and some hiking

gear, like ice picks and parts of a tent.

Ok, maybe calling them not worthy of note was a bit stretched, but after finding that duffle bag with the water purifier and the gas canisters, the rest didn't seem to have that much of an impact on me.

"Could I use the ice pick as a weapon? Hmm, with the way it's built though, it looks easy for it to get lodged inside a head and stay there." I shake my head and get up as I look at the bloody crowbar on the tool table.

(No need to fix what ain't broken, the crowbar is good enough for now. Alright, bathroom time.)

Right before I managed to open the door, it opened by itself, Saeko appearing behind it.

"The food is ready... " She says as she glances around before glancing at me. I think her face was, slightly flushed?

"Hm, I was just done, I'll go to the bathroom to clean off my gloves and arm guards." I respond as I nod, Saeko smiles and nods back before turning around.

"And be ready to carry some stuff to the Humvee before we go back to the mall." I add as I walk up next to her.

"Found something good?" She asks as she turns to me and tilts her head.

"Good, is a mighty understatement." I replied with a grin as I glanced behind me.

Return to the mall Pt 2

My life... well, it currently feels like a cheap rip-off from a cheesy romance anime right now.

I mean... Saeko made me lunch, that alone is fine-ish. But uhh, let's see...

After she finished cooking, she then placed the plates next to each other. And then, ever since taking her seat right next to me, she didn't even try to hide the fact that she was staring at me. So, I only managed to take a couple of bites before turning to stare back at her...

"You don't like it?" She asks as she tilts her head, her eyebrows making a slightly worried frown.

"That should be my question, you haven't even touched your own food yet." I answer back as I look at her.

"I'm... just a bit anxious. The only other person that has really tasted my cooking was my father. And I haven't really cooked for anyone else if you exclude the time I did it in Miss Shizuka's house. Though I guess, in the end, we didn't manage to actually eat back then... " She says as she turns to look at my plate.

"Hmm, I don't really have much to weigh it against. It's much better than my cooking to say the least. So yeah, I definitely won't say no to another chance at eating what you can make." Saeko, listening to my answer, finally smiles and nods before speaking up again.

"You can cook?" She asks as she picks her fork and knife. The reason for that tableware being that she made western food, was it because I'm not Japanese? I mean I'm looking at a full-sized steak here. As in western size and style, thus the lack of chopsticks.

"Uhh, well I was living by myself, wasn't I?" I answer as I cut a small part of the steak and bring it close to my mouth.

(Truth is, I've never cooked even once ever since coming here, but I do 'know' how to cook. Still my cooking skills are... wet paper level.)

"Hmm, I would like to..."

"Nope, not going to happen, for your sake." I cut off Saeko as she tried to speak. She just turned to stare at me, while I kept looking down at my plate. Seconds later, Saeko started giggling before turning back to her own plate.

The rest of our 'lunch break' went on without us speaking. Though I did catch Saeko giving me an occasional 'sneak' peek as we kept eating.

Once we were done, Saeko then took the empty plates to the sink to wash them. Which is a good thing too, as I intended to return here after the mall falls. The last thing I need is having the place stink of rotten food.

Now why I wanted to return here? Two reasons mainly...

The first one was that with a garage this big, we could easily hide the Humvee inside if we somehow managed to move the jeep out of the way. The second was the wooden boat. If it's somehow connected to the anime, then I know full well where that boat is heading...

"You sure you don't want any help?" I ask as I look at the busy girl.

"Naier, it's just two plates." She responds with a chuckle as she turns to look at me.

"Alright, I'll be on the couch then. Don't think I want to toss around duffle bags with a full stomach." I reply as I turn around and walk towards the living room, only to realize something that I had missed...

(Huh? There is no couch here, the hell? Weird set up for a living room.)

I glance around the living room, only to spot two recliners in the corner.

(Hmm, that could work.)

I walk over to the recliners and then drag them to the center of the room, next to the giant table. Don't know why, but sitting on them all the way in the corner nudged me the wrong way for some reason. I then put them in a position so they faced each other and sat on one, while putting my legs on the other. And yeah, I had taken off my shoes in the bathroom before eating. End of the world or not, no reason to live like a pig if you can do otherwise.

I let out a small sigh of relief as I began to relax then looked at the giant screen ahead of me.

(If only you worked, and had a gaming console. While I'm more of a PC type of guy, I would be fine with just about anything right about now. Except for sports games, never liked sports games. Too repetitive with no real feeling of progression.)

I chuckle to myself as I close my eyes and stretch out my back, after fixing the mask and balaclava that I had wrapped around my right shoulder...

-Sometime later-

To be honest. I must have nearly fallen asleep, until I heard footsteps near me

(Is Saeko going to sit down as well?)

As I was about to take my legs off of the second recliner, something stopped me. Before I could figure out why, I felt some pressure on the left part of my hip. Which then slowly traveled up to my left

shoulder, along with something slithering on the lower part of my back.

I slightly opened one eye only to see Saeko's face resting on my shoulder, her eyes closed and her free hand placed near my neck. She was also in her 'normal' clothing, that being her school shirt and that very short skirt.

(Well, maybe I can't play video games right now. But, this is a goddamn good alternative.)

I closed my eyes again. And, I'm pretty sure I fell asleep soon after.

-An Indeterminable Amount of Time Later-

You know, I feel like there's something I'm forgetting. No, I'm sure of it. There's something that I've forgotten, but what...?

The car with the zombies? Nah, I closed that. And closed the door to the garage as well for good measures. The doors that lead outside? Nope, closed them too.

Uhhh, the gas stove? No, Saeko was the one that cooked, and I'm sure she's attentive enough not to forget to kill the fire. So uhhh... what am I forgetting?

As I kept thinking, I slowly started to feel my left shoulder being a bit, wet...

I open my eyes, and look at Saeko.

(Uhh, Saeko... drools. I forgot that Saeko drools. Oh, come on.)

Saeko had her mouth slightly open, part of it touching my shoulder. And uhh, yeah, that part felt wet.

(Well, it's not like I'm disgusted. I mean we already kissed, and it was not just our lips that touched. But, I can't sleep now, I feel wet, and I don't like feeling wet. I could try to close her mouth, but I don't want

to wake her up. Actually, how long have I been asleep? I don't feel tired anymore, if that counts for anything.)

I look around the room while trying not to move too much. The sun was still out, and it didn't seem to be any darker outside than before I slept.

(Hmm, the rich dude might have a wristwatch that still works.

Now. Being that I'm still stuck on the chair with Saeko being off to dreamland. Might as well make the best of it. Let's see... if we count on the anime timeline. After the group returns from the clinic, Takashi, Kohta and Asami have a chat on how the clinic was a total failure, while the rest of the group talks about several other things. Things such as Kohta and Asami's relationship or how there's somebody or something for each one of them that keeps them going.

This is also where Saeko and Rei were shown thinking of Takashi in the anime. And then it is also when Saeko mentions that if the guys in the group end up going out of control they, as in the girls, must do everything they can for them. In other words, it was a mild way of saying 'fuck them till they calm their tits down'.

Yeah, I'm having mixed feelings about that memory now. Anyway, after that, Asami sees the dead cop and snaps, lashing out at Kohta. This is when the group prepares to leave. Now, so far I didn't manage to get rid of that dead cop, and depending on how 'late' I will be when I return to the mall, I might end up being 'too' late. Hmm, well I could...)

Before I could think any more, Saeko started moving about. She then lifted her free hand in the air, arching herself backward as she stretched with a moan, taking a deep breath shortly after...

(I'm not staring... I'm not.)

Yeah, no. I was staring, hard. I mean give me a break here. Arching backward like that, made her chest seem even bigger...

Saeko then rubs her eyes with one hand before opening them to look at me. At least, she was not drooling on me anymore.

"Hmm, how long did we fall sleep for?" She asks with drowsy eyes.

As she moved about, her hand ended up on the spot where her head was at. She blinks several times before turning to look at the wet stain on my shirt, or well where the stain would normally be at. You know, black clothes. Nonetheless, Saeko's eyes instantly snapped open as she tried to get up.

"Aaahh! I'm so soooowh!" It was all she managed to say before she slipped backward because of her awkward position. Ending up with her upper body on the floor, while her legs were still on me.

"You know, if you'll end up killing yourself because you drooled on me, then I'd rather have you drool on me instead. I hope that that did not come off as weird as I think it just did..." I say as I fix my posture, then extend my arm to Saeko. Which she took as she got up.

"I'm really, really sorry" Was the first thing she said after she got on her feet.

"It's fine, now quit saying that you're sorry, or I'll get mad." I say in a joking manner.

"I really didn't mean to... "

"Aaaand, no more of it. I said it's fine or is it that you don't believe me?" I ask as I raise my eyebrows and stare at Saeko. She just stayed quiet, her face slightly red.

"So, this is the fabled trap question. Hmm... I think that your skills are starting to rub off on me." I add as I get up and pat her head. Saeko just lets out a slight sigh as she smiles.

"As for your question, I have no idea how long we slept for, there are no clocks in the living room. So, I'll check the male corpse in the

garage. Usually guys with suits like these wear expensive wristwatches for the show of it. If we are lucky and he has a mechanical one, then we can check the time." I keep speaking as I stretch, then start walking towards the garage.

"Alright, I will get my sword and join up with you. You also said that we needed to carry some stuff, did you not?" Saeko spoke out with a mild tone as she moved towards the kitchen, her face still as red as it was a few seconds ago.

"Yeah, that too." I respond to Saeko as I open the garage door.

Before I started moving towards the car I noticed the bloody floor around the corpse and paused.

(I better get my shoes.)

And so, after going to the bathroom and slipping my boots and arm guards back on, I then went back to the garage, towards the corpse that was lying head down on the floor next to the jeep. I started by checking its arms, and sure enough, I saw a silver watch on his left arm.

"You people are like an SSR drop in a mobile game." I chuckle as I take the watch and look at the time. The arrows in it slowly ticking away.

(Nice, it works. So it's, forty past five.)

I then check the man's pockets for good measure, and find the keys that I think belonged to the house. Just then, Saeko also walked into the room.

"It's forty past five." I speak up as I turn to her and show her the watch in my hand, before shoving it in my pocket.

"Not going to wear it?" She asks as she tilts her head.

"Too shiny for my liking." I respond as I move to the two duffle bags filled with loot.

"These two, hmm. We need as much as we can from one of them, the one with the gas canisters and water filter, not really something you can just find anywhere. The other, we can take what seems important and leave the rest. So, let's see if we can fit all that in the two hiking bags." I add as I point at the duffle bags, then at the hiking bags. Saeko nods and walks up next to me.

(While I'm aiming to return here, I don't want to leave all that good stuff behind. What if the house gets raided while we are gone? Or we just can't come here in the end?)

We then emptied the two duffle bags and took everything out of the hiking bags, then started putting things we wanted to take into the hiking bags, by order of importance. It went something like. Water filter/purifier, gas stove, canisters, books and lastly the disinfectants.

The tools did not take too much space, so we just shoved them in as well. Don't know if Shizuka knows how to use that type of stuff though. We mostly ignored disinfectants as we just looted the clinic and Saeko told me that we took a good amount of stuff like that in 'our' bags back with the others.

In the end, we had one hiking bag filled with the medical stuff. Out of the fifteen books, we took eight, we also did put some medical bottles filled with whatever in the small pockets of the hiking bags that could not fit anything else. In the end, we kept the water treatment pills that were already in the hiking bags, along with the medical tools and the stove.

For the gas canisters, we had to take the duffle bag itself. The hiking bag couldn't fit even half of them inside.

"What's in the duffle bag over there?" Saeko asks as she moves towards the one that I had tossed aside, the one that had all the, 'Female' stuff.

Saeko peered inside the bag, then her eyes then went slightly wide as she just quickly turned around and came back to me. I guess, the 'marital aid' inside was flashy enough to catch her attention.

"Curiosity killed the cat?" I ask with a slight smirk, Saeko just laughed awkwardly as she scratched her cheek.

I then took the balaclava and mask off my shoulder and wore them before turning back towards her. Saeko just looked at me for a couple of seconds, a strange expression on her face.

"And just when I was starting to get used to your face." She says as she slightly tilts her head.

"'Getting used' huh, never realized my face was so bad that it needed getting used too." I respond jokingly as I raise an eyebrow, which was now hidden once again behind my mask. Saeko just giggles and shakes her head.

"You know that is not what I meant Naier." She answers as she smiles at me, I nod as I laugh through my nose, then turn to the bags.

"Ok, so, we need to find a road that goes, uhh... " I lift the duffle bag and pass it over my shoulder, then move and pick up the crowbar.

"If we leave the house from the front, we need to keep moving straight." Saeko adds right after.

"Right. Hmm, I wonder." I walk back to the car trunk and take the keys from the lock. I then walk to the driver's seat and open the door, put the keys in the ignition switch, and flip them on. Nothing.

"Pfft, expensive car my ass, doesn't even have basic E.M.P protection." I groan in a half-joking manner I close the door.

"Do you remember how many intersections we passed to get from the mall to the clinic?" I ask as I turn to Saeko.

"Hmm it was six... I think" Saeko answers.

"Ok, that plus two, three if we count the seaside road. So either nine, or ten in total" Saeko nods at me as I speak.

"The Humvee is towards the right with the way we are facing now, and we walked a relatively long distance when we walked on the beach. So as we leave the house, we need to go right. If the corpses are still there and have not moved, we need to move two more intersections down from them as the ext intersection after then was the one we used, and the one after it was blocked off. If all else fails, we just take a random right intersection and keep going till we see the mall, it's a rather tall building after all." I listed out our plan as I tried to get a better grip on the bag. But uhh, it didn't make me look any less stupid with that duffle bag looking like a sign over my head.

"Lastly, shotgun. And we're good to go." I add as I move to the living room and take the shotgun from the big table.

"Sling... " I groan as I take off the duffle bag to pass the shotgun over my shoulder before wearing the duffle bag again.

"Ok, now. Are you ready?" I ask as I turn to Saeko while fixing my jacket, she just nods with a serious expression.

With our preparations done, we both moved to the front door. As I open it and walk outside, Saeko follows right behind me. Only stopping to look behind her, towards the insides of the house, for a few seconds.

"Forgot something?" I ask, Saeko turns to me as she shakes her head with a smile.

"No, let's go." She responds as she closes the door...

"Ohh! Wait! Wait, wait wait!" I flailed my arms as Saeko was about to close the door, causing her to freeze.

"Huh, wha... " Before Saeko could lock us out for good, I put the keys I took from the corpse and checked if they fitted the door. Which they did.

"This place would be a good spot if we ever need to leave the mall." I continued as I turned to Saeko, she stayed quiet for a few seconds, before nodding. I then move to the front gate of the house and look outside.

"Uhh, better go from the back." I added as I pointed at the roaming corpses on the road.

After I made sure that the front gate and front yard door were locked, Saeko and I turned around and went towards the gate we used to enter the building, the one in the back of the house. The beach was thankfully, still clear.

(I would expect corpses to gather at the sea with its constant ambient noise. Yet, they seem to avoid it. I wonder if they don't like water? I mean, hypothetically speaking, if all they can do is hear and feel, being fully submerged in liquid would gimp their senses. But, can zombies even 'not' like something in the first place? They don't seem to have the mental capacity for that.)

"Is something wrong? " Saeko asks as I kept staring silently the rolling waves beyond the gate.

"No, I was just wondering why the corpses ain't gathering at the sea. The waves do make quite the noise after all. Not loud enough?" I ask as I open the gate.

"Uhh, I do not know... " Saeko just lifts her shoulders slightly for a shrug as she answers. After that, we closed the gate, lock it and turned left, going towards the same way we came...

-Some time later-

We walked along the beach for quite some time, until I spotted the grouped-up corpses in the distance. The same one we passed by before. In other words, they didn't move at all. Then again, I didn't really check where they were the first time around, so I was just going by a hunch.

"Ok, here's the plan, we'll go up back to the road by that upcoming staircase, and then w'll go left on the second intersection." I point at the set of stairs in the distance, and Saeko nods in agreement without speaking.

And so, after reaching the stairs, we went up. Then continued straight until we reached the targeted intersection, which thankfully was still clear. We then went up that intersection, and I mean 'up', because it was once again an uphill road.

(I don't mean to whine, but should this duffle bag be this fucking heavy?)

I groan under my breath as I kept walking up the uphill road, Saeko in front of me with her hand on the sword's hilt. The corpses that roamed about were mostly by themselves, so we just avoided any parts of the road that had more than one corpse in close vicinity. And if we happen to find a lone corpse blocking the way? Well, Saeko didn't seem to miss the chance to rip its arms off and beat it with them. Well, actually she just decapitated them. Though, I can clearly imagine her doing the arm ripping thing too.

"Can you keep going, Naier? Do you want to rest for a bit?" Saeko asks as she glances back at me while we keep moving.

"I'm fine, you're the one jumping around while swinging that sword, not me." I respond, Saeko just smiles before nodding, then turns to look at the street ahead.

Shortly after, we reached the first intersection after the hill. Which was also on the top of the hill. I took a look around the intersection

and then notice that there was a big rig at the end of the street to our right. Along with a crap-load of corpses next to it.

"Hmm the big rig? If it's on the next intersection to our right, that means we're one intersection next to the road we used after we left the clinic. So, we actually need to move one intersection left." I say to Saeko as I turn to look at the road to our left, then at the street ahead. Truth is though, the road ahead seemed to be in a much better condition compared to the one we used.

"Are you sure we should go left Naier?" Saeko asks as she looks at the corpses that roamed the street on the left.

"No, the street ahead looks safer, we can turn left later. Worst case scenario, we'll go all the way to the mall on this street, then turn on an intersection before we get too close. Besides, most roads near the mall are in a much better state when compared to here. No point risking it." I answer as I motion to Saeko to keep moving forward with my hand, she nods and starts walking next to me.

(If we find a blocked-off road ahead of us after, we walked past the clinic, we could then try to take the same road we used to come here. That is if our group didn't march like they're in a damn parade on their return trip.)

As we walked along the road, it started to slowly go downhill, literally speaking thankfully. And much to my surprise, I could see that it was 'clear' for a relatively long distance ahead.

(Then again, if they did march back like a parade, like shooting a gun for example, corpses from this road might have moved away, or gathered to the right side of the road. Still, it makes me wonder, what are they doing right now?

I mean in the manga, when they returned to the mall, they were talking about the clinic incident. But, they don't show us if that's the first thing they did after returning. And, while this time we had no deaths, an incident did happen, that being me and Saeko getting

stranded. So, even if let's say that they don't give a single fig about me, Takashi would still want to at least try and save Saeko. Uhh, on one hand, it does make me extra salty that I know that Takashi also likes Saeko. On the other hand, I know that he will try to look after her, so I don't expect the group to just write us off for dead.)

After a long while spent inside my own head, I took a look around me. Seeing no dangers around, I nod to myself and turn towards Saeko, who was in front of me.

(So, most likely, rather than talking about the clinic's failure, the group would likely be talking about rescuing us? That would probably end with some of them wanting to wait, while others will want to go out right away and search. Now if that discussion did happen, I have no idea who would vote what. From a logical point of view, going out to look for us while having no idea where we are is like looking for a needle in a haystack. A cannibalistic and batshit crazy haystack.

Then again, I also can't see them just sitting on their thumbs either. So? Maybe they'll have somebody looking out for us on the roof? Kohta maybe? He did do the same thing once before when we were mapping out the surrounding area, so that seems possible. But, if he has Asami with him, and she is looking outside as well she might spot the lady cop. The dead lady cop. Uhh, well I'm just speculating here, so I can't really tell, they could be...)

"Naier we are nearing the clinic." Saeko speaks up as she turns to glance at me.

Throwing a quick glance at the purple-haired samurai, I then looked around me, but I could not make out anything that looked like the clinic.

"Ah, you counted the intersections we pas... "As I start speaking, Saeko casually whacks a corpse on the head with her blade's sheath, causing it to take several steps back before it fell on its ass.

I followed the corpse's location with my eyes until I was looking behind me, to see that the road we took had a 'line' of corpses that were all moving about as they laid on the ground...

"... Passed them." I turn to Saeko as I finish my sentence to see her nod with a casual 'mhm'.

(I kind of forgot that she's a frigging badass with the way she acted back at the house...)

Soon we reached the next intersection and sure enough, I could see a small park in the distance to my right, the one behind the clinic. I then turned to look straight ahead, to see that the road was indeed clear.

"We can keep going straight, so let's keep going straight. Once we're near the mall, we'll turn left at one of the intersections. Doing that will lead us to the Humvee." I move next to Saeko and point at the road ahead of us, and with that, we start moving again.

(Hmm, wait, one intersection? As the road that leads to the clinic from the mall is a straight line to our right, this road should lead us to the parking field. The Humvee was on the second intersection after that, so it's two intersections from where we are now, not one.)

"Uhh, nothing to be alarmed of, but it might be two intersections to the right, not one. Without a map or some sort of drawing I can't remember the exact distance." I add as I scratch my mask.

"Not a problem Naier, no need to worry." Saeko glances at me and smiles.

As we kept moving forward, I noticed that the corpses that roamed about had actually gathered to the right part of the street.

"Hmm, looks like I was right. Our group did go with the 'loud and stupid' approach, as the road to our right should be the road they took to return, and all the corpses ahead of us are gathered towards

the right." I say as I look at the corpse. Then motion Saeko to move more to the left. And soon, we ended up walking next to each other, with Saeko to my right.

We kept going in silence for some time, what corpses were on the left part of the road, were the ones that could not move to begin with. Some stuck inside a crashed car, or behind a dumpster or walking up against a pole, you know, normal stuff.

"There is something I have been wondering for some time now." Saeko begins talking as we walk.

"Why did you let Takashi become the group's leader Naier? So far, most of our decisions were made based on your actions and ideas." She turns her head to me as she speaks.

"What do you mean?" I ask back.

"When Takashi wanted to go to the police station after he and Miyamoto got split from the group, you were the one who said that we should meet up at the park instead. When we got stuck at the barricade near the estate, you were the one that thought of using the flash-bang. At the estate, we also went with your plan of using the Humvee to drive the horde away. And here again, it was you who gave the 'payment' idea for the team that went to the clinic." She keeps staring at me after she finishes.

"For one, the reason I could make these decisions was because I was not the leader. I find it much easier to think of something when I don't have everybody's eyes over my head. And, well, I can barely take care of a pet dog, there's no way I'm going to try and take care of a group of people." I answer as I shrug.

"I see. So you find it easier to move the threads behind the spotlight? Alice must have known something to name you an evil overlord." Saeko responds as she makes a slight grin, with me chuckling as I shake my head.

"With the way I change nicknames, I wonder which one I will get next. And I still need to find who called me a Penguin." I tilt my head as I speak.

"Shizuka." Saeko answers flatly.

"Huh, should have figured." I respond as I turn back to the street ahead.

(And there is one more reason I don't want to lead, one that I can't really tell anyone. You see most of my decisions were based under one important fact, that I know what is going to happen in the future. Which is also the main reason as to why I can't be the leader. My 'confidence', and my 'ability' to make plans. That isn't going to last. How long will it be until we reach Rei's mother? After that, I'll lose the only 'real' power I had in this shitshow. I might be able to make decisions for myself. I at least managed to survive the power plant. But, my decisions for the group were not on even ground compared to Takashi's. And after we reach Rei's mother, Takashi might prove to be a better leader than me. This is why I try to keep him on the steering wheel.)

And after some time had passed in silence, I saw a building that stood taller than the rest.

"I see the mall, not too far now." I look at the structure in the distance as I speak, Saeko nods as she also looks in the same direction.

"Should we turn right now?" She asks right after.

"Yeah, first clear road, we go right two times." I respond.

And that turn ended up being two intersections later. From there we went straight and then turned right as the road ahead was not what you can call safe. So we ended up having to go right again on another intersection. The moment we reached the end of that road I looked around and...

(Huh, wait a minute.)

I look to my right to see a silver sedan with a couple of corpses surrounding it from the opposite direction that I was looking from. And to my left, a big group of corpses in the distance to the right part of the street.

"I used this road with Takashi when we went to the Humvee, it should be on the right past the silver sedan. The next intersection should have the tree cluster." I say as I point at the car that I took a break on with Takashi.

"Almost there then." Saeko nodded as we picked up the pace past the silver car and into the last stretch of the road. Which we passed with no real trouble, again, thanks to Saeko.

The moment we reached the tree cluster I motioned to Saeko, and we entered the tree-line before taking a last look around us.

After we reached the Humvee, I kneel down and check under the car for any unpleasant surprises before going to the trunk. I lift the net and put my hand in my pocket... To find nothing.

(Are you shitting me?)

I hurriedly put my hand in the other pocket, and find the keys.

(Ohh, never mind.)

I let out a silent sigh for the impromptu heart attack before opening the trunk. I then carefully place the duffle back in a corner under the second net, and Saeko gives me her bag which I also place in a corner under the net. After that I close the trunk, lock it and hide the Humvee under the net once again.

"And that's that." I nod as I turn around and stretched out.

"Ohhh, sec." I turn around and open the trunk again, then proceed to reload the shotgun and handgun.

"Shame we lost the second handgun's magazine. Oh well." I look at the handgun as I reload it.

"Got to remember and take the holster belt from my bag too." I whisper to myself as I put the gun in my pocket.

I then exit the car and turn to Saeko after locking it, tossing the net over it once again.

"Ok, ready?" I ask, Saeko nods at me, and we both turn to leave the car.

(I didn't forget the keys, did I ?)

I checked my pocket to make sure the keys were in there as I walked. Thankfully, they were.

And so, crowbar in hand, we move back to the street, then turn towards the road that led to the mall.

"How are we going to get inside?" Saeko asks as we start running.

"That. Is a very good question. I could just shoot a gun to get their attention, but it won't be just 'their' attention I will be getting if I do that." I answer.

We ran past the first intersection and continued running down the road, which was still empty. Yeah, the same road that Saeko went nuts on when we first arrived.

The moment we reached the end of that road and walked into the parking field.

"Ok, well, time to summon the big bad boss." I take my handgun out of my pocket and point it at the corpses that were gathered all together to my left.

(Now, where is that cop lady...?)

Several seconds later...

"Naier?" Saeko, who was next to me with her sword drawn, leaned her head towards me.

"I'm trying to find the ugliest one." I replied as I kept looking down the gun's sights, Saeko just giggled next to me.

(Ughh, come on you little shit, where are you...)

"Umm, we have unwanted guests coming towards us, you might want to hurry a bit Naier..." Saeko speaks up seconds later.

(God, work with me you stupid dead cop.)

In the end, with the cop nowhere in sight, I just point at the closest corpse and pull the trigger.

"Alright let's go. I do hope that the group inside got the message." I add as I motion Saeko with my head, and start running towards the door.

Seconds later I see a pair of pink twin tails pop up from the edge of the mall's roof, which then disappears as fast as they appeared.

The moment we reached the door we looked inside, only to see nobody on the other side.

"At least leave a person to guard the door if you didn't write us off for dead..." I groan as I look at the empty hallway.

"See, group leader decisions." Saeko whispers in a joking manner as she stands next to me.

"Well, I did wake half the block before thinking of this plan. So, fifty-fifty?" I answer as I turn to her with a slight shrug.

"If you made only perfect decisions, then how would I make myself useful to you?" Saeko replies with a smile as she turns around as

she brandishes her sword, standing between me and the oncoming corpses.

"By not dying for starters." I respond as I walk up next to her.

Saeko closes her eyes as she continues smiling.

"Do not worry, I got no intention of dying. At the very least, not now that I just found my reason to keep living." She answers as she turns to me, the smile still on her face.

(Well, that was straightforward.)

All I could do was stare back at Saeko's radiant smile. I mean, sure I knew she probably felt like that by now. But hearing her say it was, you know...

And just then, the door behind us swung wide open.

"Well, I want you to keep on living too, so come on, let's go." I whisper next to Saeko's ear as I turn around to run towards the now open door.

The moment we passed through the mall's doors, Takashi and Rei shut them close, and started to re-barricade.

"Impeccable timing." I chuckle as I put the handgun in my pocket, Takashi nodded after giving me a glance.

After that, the four of us moved towards a room on the first floor, where the rest of the group was at. The room looked like the same one the group used when they talked about the clinic in the manga. It's also where Asami saw the cop corpse and...

"Saeko, Penguin!" That was Shizuka.

"Saeko, Mister Overlord!" That was Alice.

"Saeko, Idiot!" That was Saya.

"Bark, bark!" I don't even wanna know what Zeke called me.

"Saeko, Naier!" At least Kohta got my name right. Asami who was next to him just smiled, with her mouth wide open.

"Uhh how many names do I have again?" I ask myself in a murmur as the group gathered around Saeko and I.

"See, I told you they would be fine!" Kohta said excitedly the moment he got near.

"Y... yeah." Takashi responds half-heartedly as he glanced at Saeko.

"Still, you two need to stop being so reckless." Shizuka speaks up next as she tries to make a serious face. Which only looked comical in my opinion.

Saeko nodded, and, I wanted to shrug. But uhh, I'd probably be dead then and there if I tried to brush this off with Saya staring daggers at me right now. So, I just nodded as well.

"Yeah... Naier might have ended up in a tight spot because of circumstances. But Saeko, you ended up putting yourself in danger by your own decision. What if you didn't manage to jump over that corridor for example?" Takashi adds up right after.

Before either of us could speak up Saya walked up to me and pointed her finger to my face.

"The point is that avoiding being put in a tight spot to begin with is first priority. Something you don't seem to get. First in the estate, now this. Do I need to tie you to a chair to keep you under control?" Saya hisses at me.

"Yeah! You need to stop being bad! You made Saya really sad! She didn't even want to eat! And she stayed up on the roof looking for you all this time the moment she heard that you didn't return! She was really worried!" Alice starts shouting as she points her finger at

me. And, oh boy did she just lay it out flat in the open. Saya's face must have changed to every single shade of red in existence.

"M-munchkin! What are you saying?! I, I was not worried about him! I... I was just worried that we might end up losing two people from our group because Naier is an idiot!" She shouts back at Alice as she grabs her by her cheeks.

"Buut Shayaaa. Ooowwiieeee!" Was the only thing Alice managed to say.

"It's big sister for you! And you! Stop being an idiot and stop staring at me like an idiot!" She shouts as darts her head to me right after.

"Saya, you will never get what you truly desire if you keep acting like this." Saeko speaks up right after.

(Huh, wait. What. Did she just?)

"Wh... Wha... What are you talking about! I..."

"I want to clean myself up. I got blood on me, so if you excuse me." Saeko, still with a smile, cuts Saya off as she turns around to walk away..

Now everybody was looking as weirded out as I was. Except for Alice, who was smiling, I think. Maybe she was sending signals for help? I can't really tell.

"I'm, uhh, going to the roof." I add in a hurry as I turn around and walk away as fast as I can. I had that feeling that if I stayed there any longer, I would end up getting a chair to the face...

Plus, you know, I had the whole mall getting overrun thing to deal with.

A castle made of sand

"Uhh... come on, think, think." I lightly tapped my mask as I stared at the ground below, at the corpses that roamed about the parking lot.

(Asami will see the cop corpse soon, nothing I can do about that. What matters now, is making sure she survives the day.)

I pull my handgun from my pocket and glance at it.

(The reason Shimada and Asami got killed boils down to that snotty brat, that, fun fact, survives.)

I then aim the gun at the corpses.

(If I get rid of him... then both Shimada and Asami won't die. While I don't really care what happens to the guy, I can't let Asami die, for Kohta's sake at least. Still, am I going to resort to killing people again?)

I lower the gun and look at the buildings in the distance, then shake my head and put the gun back in my pocket.

(Yea, for good or bad, I don't feel like mulling over that fact. I need to think of other methods to keep Asami alive. If all else fails, then I can just take Kohta's gun and shoot the brat before Asami charges to her death. Though that would be bad, very bad... for me, that is.)

I took a look at the street that leads to the Humvee, which by the way was a little 'blocked' off now. Yeah, that shot I fired to get my group's attention? It also caused the grouped up corpses to move between the field into the road, along with any surrounding corpses. Well, that's one way to clean part of the parking field. I wish they didn't block off the road I needed to take, though.

(The best and simplest way to solve this problem, of course, is to bring the Humvee here before the others have to walk through an

army of corpses. Though, that does mean sneaking out the back door to get the Humvee, preferably alone, and well. For one, Saeko probably won't just accept leaving if she doesn't know where I'm at. I could take her with me, I don't see why a small team can't get to the car while the rest wait here. It might draw the attention of the other survivors but, hmm. It'll be much easier to convince my group too... Especially since this time around, the guns are all in the Humvee. Okay, that will be the first plan, the others would wait on the second floor while a group of two or three get the car. That should make sure that the big group wouldn't have to cross the parking lot.)

It was the sudden sound of the roof door closing behind me that almost caused me to jump out of my skin, before I hurriedly turned around. Thankfully, to my distracted mind, it was only the old couple.

I lifted my hand and waved at them. They did the same as they walked towards me. Though, with the old couple being here. It means that the window to act is already closing.

"You should be careful not to fall with the way you are sitting." The granny speaks up.

"Thanks for the concern, I'll be fine." I answer as I turn to look back towards the parking lot again.

"Why are you up here all by yourself? Is everything alright?" The old man asks right after.

"Yeah, just thinking..." I answer back.

A short silence passed between us until the old lady started speaking again.

"I heard that it was you that got trapped in the clinic because of me. I... I am really sorry that I've put you through needless danger." She apologizes as she bows.

"Don't be. Because of my trip to the clinic, I managed to find something that was very important to me. Actually, I think that I should be thanking you instead." I chuckle as I look at the granny, who lifted her head and smiled at me. After that, we didn't speak for a while, the silence allowing me to sink into my head once again.

(Again, the simplest course of action. Is still to just 'deal' with the brat before the rest leave. Though, if I were to go with that plan, then it's something I need to do right now. If the old couple is already here, then that means that shit is about to hit the fan.

There's also a way to save Asami, even if I allow the 'original' course of things to go, but it would actively antagonize Takashi. Boiling things down to the simplest facts, the reason Kohta had to shoot Asami comes down to Takashi's decision. He went 'leader' mode and ordered Kohta to not go after her. Though, I wonder if he would be so willing to do the same if it was Saeko or Rei instead of Asami that ran off. In either case, this time we're better prepared, and I'm here too. So, if it comes down to it, I can just ignore Takashi and help Asami directly. There's also a large chance that Kohta and Saeko will follow my lead if I try to help the cop. Yet, if Takashi takes this the wrong way I'm definitely going to end up on his bad side, and he already seemed to be somewhat butt-hurt because of what Saeko did in the clinic...

As for how to make sure that Asami survives. Hmm, she was next to two cars right before her death in the manga. So, if she shoots a window and hides in one of the cars, it should buy us enough time to get the Humvee and return, or draw the corpses away with gunfire. Though, that would get us surrounded and depending on where the big group of corpses is at, that could be a big fucking problem.

And well, there is the simplest plan of all. Stop her before she manages to get away. Simple, but she might start acting out because we stopped her from doing her 'duty'. And, as I'm the one that will have to stop her, because the rest failed miserably in the manga to do so, she will probably label me as a 'bad guy'. Plus, I can't know

for sure if she won't just run away the moment I let her go, and I can't just drag her around...)

I move my head and hear my neck bones crack.

(Ughh, my poor overworked brain... Why can't I just summon a flying fucking tank or something?...)

Just then, I heard the door slam again. Turning around, I see Asami running straight towards the roof's edge.

(Ohh, well time's up.)

I get up and go next to the old couple.

"Looks like your cop is having some problems." I say as I motion my head towards Asami.

The old couple turns to walk towards Asami. Who soon, also notices them.

"H,huh? Hey you two! It's dangerous over here!" She shouts at the old couple as she quickly walks up towards them.

While the three kept talking, I also walked up to her. And by the time she had finished talking to the old couple, I was next to her and we were staring at each other in silence. Or she was trying to at least, as she kept darting her eyes around.

"What did you do?" I ask flatly.

"Huh, what are you talking about? A, Asami is just fine." She replies with a meek smile, eyes still darting around.

"I'm wearing a mask, and you're still trying to avoid looking me in the eye. So, again, what did you do?" I ask again.

Asami stayed quiet for some time before lowering her head, then started speaking.

"I... I didn't mean to. But, I... did something horrible." She says in a low tone.

"And the correct decision to do after that was to go to the roof?" I ask again, tone dripping with sarcasm.

"But Kohta hates me now. I said, something very mean to him." Her voice started to break as she spoke.

"And now he hates you?" Asami just nodded at my question, not trusting herself to speak as she started to tear up.

"And you hate him." I added right after.

"No! I don't hate him! I... " She darts her head to look at me as she begins to speak, only to stop mid sentence and look back down.

"Did he say anything to you that proves that he hates you?" I ask.

"But, what I... "

"Yes or no officer, did he say anything that proves that he hates you." I ask again as I cut her off.

"No... " She answers with a meek tone.

"But you did. So, if you think that he hates you. He probably thinks you want him dead and gone from your life." I say as I fold my arms.

"So, should 'you' be running away from him right now?" I ask as I tilt my head.

"Asami!" Just then, and right on time, Kohta bursts through the door, and looks at the two of us.

"Well, lookie here. Looks like somebody is willing to give you a second chance. So don't waste it." I say as I turn around and start walking away towards the door that Kohta had just entered through.

"Oh, and one last thing, officer. Remember that your actions won't affect just you from now on." I say as I glance backwards at her before walking up to Kohta who was staring very 'intently' at me.

"I see you're dressed up for war. So, where did you hide our stuff?" I ask as I look at the bulletproof vest that Kohta was wearing.

"Oh, uhh, it's in the bra shop on the second floor. From the roof, once you get to the second floor, you need to keep going right, you'll eventually find a clothing store, it's in the section with the largest bras. And, it was Takashi's idea, not mine." He added quickly.

"Alright, well. I'm going before this place gets flooded with sugar now." I say with a grin as I pat Kohta on the shoulder. He just blinked stupidly at me as I walked past him.

(Kind of hypocritical of me, remembering what happened with Saeko. But, eh, whatever.)

And so, after that, I ran to the second floor as quickly as I could and headed to the store Kohta mentioned. Honestly, even if somebody saw the guns now, who cares, they will soon be running like headless chickens anyway...

The moment I reached the store, I went inside and straight to the giant bra section, then searched inside the pile until I found my bag and bokken. I guess even in this changed timeline where the group didn't bring their guns to the mall, a good hiding spot is still a good hiding spot.

"Did you guys miss me? I know I did." I say with a small snort to myself as I open the bag and dig through the medical bottles. Quickly grabbing the holster belt inside, I also picked the shotgun shells I had left inside and shoved them in my lower pants' pockets. I then wore the belt and put the handgun in its normal place.

(Finally, having the gun in my pocket was uncomfortable as fuck.)

The moment I strapped the bag on me and secured my shotgun and pistol, I turned to walk outside.

(Ok, now I should find Sae...)

Yet, before I could even finish that thought...

"Oh god! They are inside!" Somebody shouted. Looking straight outside the shop, over the railings, I saw the chubby man from the other group on the other side of the mall's main room as he looked downstairs.

The group that was there then quickly began to barricade the stairs, as the corpses started to spread like wildfire on the lower floor. Coincidentally, also blocking my path to the group on the other side. I then looked under me, and well, under me was a shitload of corpses pouring through...

(Of fucking course they would get inside from a door that's right below me, what a fucking joke. So much for planning...)

As I groan under my breath, I see my group appear on the other side of the mall. The chubby guy, who was freaking out with his head locked towards the lower floor, crashed into Shizuka's chest, which was then quickly followed by Saeko shaking the life out of him. Shortly after that, Takashi started looking around the room with the binoculars.

(Why does he need binoculars? You can see the whole place just fine without them...)

Meanwhile, I silently walked by the railing as I watched the corpses walk up the stairs that had not been barricaded yet. Which means, they were closing in towards me.

(Well, there goes every path to my group.)

As I kept walking, I saw a couple of corpses that had gotten up the stairs and had essentially blocked the path ahead of me, though they were still pretty far. I pass the bokken back into its 'sheath' and turn to look on the lower floor.

(... Too many corpses right below me. And most of them are beelining to the stairs. What ch...)

"Naier!?" And my thoughts then got interrupted by a sudden shout. I lifted my head to see that the whole group on the other side was now looking at me. Shortly after, some of the people from the other group turned to look away and began building the barricades again. Pretty much admitting that they decided that was a lost cause for them. I mean, yeah, my situation looked pretty bad. I was by myself, corpses had blocked off my way to them and nothing was barricaded on my side. Business as usual now that I think about it...

I lift my hand as I point my index finger on the ceiling and shout to the group that Kohta is on the rooftop. Before returning to looking at the lower floor as I walked by the railing. At least until a new shout attracted my attention.

"Saeko?! What are you doing?! Don't go up there!" I hear a male shout, and as I dart my head up, I see Saeko standing over the makeshift barricade, looking straight at me.

(Oh shit, that crazy woman! Okay, Naier, now or never, before she does something stupid. That's 'my' specialty.)

All the time I spent looking at the first floor was finally rewarded as I spotted a 'clear' path that led to a nearby closed emergency exit. I just had to get to the lower floor which was filled with corpses, land without breaking anything, and hope that the path I spotted would not disappear before I was through it.

(God I must be retarded...)

I vault over without letting go of the railing, to end up on the other side of the railing. I then crouch down to the lowest degree I could get while still holding on with one hand. Just before, letting go.

(This must be my stupidest idea so far... Which is saying something.)

Also, I think I heard somebody scream? Actually, maybe it was just the wind...

Second later I crash land into a corpse, that thankfully was one in the front lines or so to speak. In other words, my front was clear-ish, and the path to the door was in sight.

The moment the corpse I landed on struck the ground, I rolled forward, and the moment my boots touched the ground and stood back up, I broke into a sprint.

Straight and to the right, that was where the closed emergency door was at, and between me and the door, uhh, yeah, lot's of Black Friday customers...

I start running straight and swerve to the left, avoiding a pair of hands that reach out for me. Then as I went straight ahead, I grabbed an arm that was to my right, and using my momentum I spun around, dragging the corpse along with me before tossing it on a couple of corpses that were straight ahead of me. Well ok, I didn't exactly 'toss' the corpse, it was more like it lunged forward after I let it go and crashed into the other corpses. I then used the opening I created to keep moving straight.

So, right now, the biggest problem I could see? A line of corpses by the stairs to my left and ahead of me, which essentially blocked the other side of the mall.

(Oh for fucks sake! When did they manage to congregate like that?!)

It was like these things were hellbent on getting to the upper floor. As they flocked around every staircase that led upstairs.

(So, now what? I'm completely surrounded. Forward exit is blocked by the corpse line. Behind me is also a group of corpses that have definitely heard me by now. I really didn't think this through, did I?)

I was surrounded, so Hell knows why I found myself chuckling as I ran straight towards the corpse 'lineup' in front of me...

(Scratch that, this is my stupidest idea... yet.)

I kept running straight ahead, towards a pair of benches. And the moment I reached them, I let go of the shotgun, and using the benches as steps. I stepped up and jump, straight over the corpse line...

"WHOSE STUPID IDEA WAS THIS AGAIN?!" I shouted out of the top of my lungs as I leaped overhead the corpses. As I reach the top of my leap, I grab the shotgun that hanged on my side with one hand as I tried to calculate the place I would land and, the thing is...

(Too, far.)

No matter how I saw it, I was falling too fast, I was past the 'middle' of the line, but the way it was going, I would still end up landing inside the group of corpses...

The moment I crashed into the corpses below me, the world around me went dark. Or more like, I was so completely surrounded to the point that the light was completely blocked off. I felt time stop to a crawl as every single of the corpses began turning around to look at me. And, I could not hear shouting anymore...

With the shotgun in my hand, I pointed it straight ahead and pulled the trigger, followed by a vault forward the moment I felt the gun's recoil.

And I found myself rolling onto a corpse that got blasted back, and thankfully, out of the hole I just dug myself into. Using the momentum of my roll, I lift myself up and turn to face the corpse line that had now completely turned to face me because of the shotgun blast, and so, uhh..

"AND FUCK YOU TOO!" I flip the corpses off before turning around, running straight towards the emergency exit as I pumped a new round into the shotgun.

The moment I reach the door, I open it, with a kick. The door impacted something behind it. And as it slowly then opened, I saw a corpse on the floor behind it.

I turned back, and looked at the group on the second floor. That was now gawking at me.

"I'll wait outside!" I shouted to the group as I turned and exited the mall, jumping over the corpse that was on the floor.

(The others don't need to know that we have a car...)

Once I was outside, I took a glance around the parking lot before turning my sight towards the way to the Humvee.

(The road I need to take is to my left, and just my luck, a large group of corpses is there too. Shit, I'll have to bait them away... a gunshot should do the trick.)

I nod to my self and run up a little deeper into the parking lot.

Yet, before I could move towards my targeted destination, an annoyance decided to rear its head.

"Help me! Please, please help me! Don't leave me here!" I turn in the opposite direction of the corpse group to see the brat that started all this on a van, looking straight at me with a pleading expression.

(Huh... Well, look at that. I could leave his sorry ass there to rot. But him being there puts Asami in danger. I'm going to help him, but I'm not taking his sorry ass to the Humvee with me.)

I sigh and run towards the wailing teenager, and the moment I got near the van, I pointed my shotgun at the corpses that were clawing on its front side.

"Help me! Help me! I'm sorry! I'm so sorry!" The kid wailed as it sat on all fours on the van's roof.

"Stop screaming, you're getting more of them around the car." I say as I pull the trigger.

The corpses on the front part of the van crashed against the windshield before collapsing.

"Now, get down from there." I say as I pump a new round.

"What, no! There are still more of those things around!" He shouts.

(Oh, for fuck's sake...)

I ran up to the car's front and climbed up the van until I could reach the teenager. As he stared at me like a deer in front of headlights, I grabbed him by the collar and yanked him towards me as I jumped back down.

"What are you doiiiiii!" He ended up falling spectacularly face-first to the ground.

"There, I just saved you. You're welcome, now you're on your own." I say to the snooty teenager as I turn around and start walking away.

"Ahhh! Where are you going! You can't just leave me here, I am unarmed, and there are still those things around! Please help me! I'm sorry!" The teenager quickly gets up and starts stumbling towards me.

"You are NOT coming with me brat. Now, beat it before I do something that you'll regret." I warned as I glanced at him before turning to look at the corpse group ahead.

(Let's see... If I shoot at the ones on the left, I can... Huh? Wait a sec.)

The corpses were moving towards me?

(Uhh, why? Oh shit, of course. I just used the shotgun. Great, if saving the kid led me to getting nom'ed on, I'm going to be so pissed.)

"I am really sorry! I didn't know what I was thinking, please, I don't have a weapon, I'm going to die if you don't help me, please help me!" The kid almost runs into me as I turn around and point the shotgun to his face.

"One more step and I'm blowing your face to bits. If you make me turn around a third time, I WILL shoot you. Now fucking scram already, I'm not your friend." I narrowed my eyes as I stared at him, before turning around again.

(Ok, if they are coming towards me, I can just walk past them from the sides... Hmm, yeah, that could...)

"I said I was sorry! I don't know what to do! Help me! You have to help me!" I felt my eye twitch as I once again heard wailing shouting behind me.

I quickly pull my handgun out of its holster, turn around, and aim straight at the teenager's head.

"I'm not letting you anywhere near my group. You brought this to yourself.... "

The teenager opened his mouth to start shouting again, yet instead. A gunshot echoed, and the teenager jerked his head backward as he

fell on his back, and stayed there.

I took a deep breath as I put the gun back into its holster.

(Fucking hell, why didn't he just fucking leave?)

With a sigh, I turned to walk towards the corpses that blocked my way to the Humvee...

Once I got near the large group, I started running as I swerved slightly to the right, ending with the corpses to my left, a couple of meters away from me. And soon, I saw an opening between the corpses and the road I needed to take.

I run straight to the end of the parking field, vault over the railing and keep going straight towards the road that....

Ok this street will always be empty with how many times Saeko went full nuts mode on it...

I ran past the first intersection and kept going straight down the next road, until I reached the tree cluster, then, straight towards the Humvee. The moment I reach it, I quickly take the net off, fold it, go to the driver's seat and unlock the car, then open the door and toss the net on the back seat as I get inside.

I put the keys in the ignition and started the engine, then hit the reverse and exited the tree clusters before switching the gear and stepping on the pedal again to drive straight towards the mall.

The moment the parking lot came into view, I could see my group to my right, along with, Shimada?

I steer slightly to the left and keep driving straight. And the moment I entered the parking lot, I pressed on the brakes and made a sharp turn to the right in order to avoid the large group of corpses. Then, I went straight to my group before stopping the car right next to them, I climbed through the hatch and turned to look at them.

"Time we get out of here no?!" I shouted.

The rest of the group then quickly entered the car, and the moment everybody was in, I got back inside, ending up on the passenger's seat as Shizuka took the wheel.

And as we sped off, I glanced towards through my window towards the only real 'corpse' in the field. All the while the group kept excitedly chatting, or uhh, shouting. I mean, they did just escape with their lives after all.

(Ugh, in the end, I ended up shooting the brat. Why couldn't that idiot just walk away?)

"... aier?"

(This is the third person I killed, the third normal person. Uhh, I remember Saeko saying something in the manga right before they left the mall. What was it again? An honorable man follows a code of chivalry? Or something like that. Heh, wonder what she would think of me if she found out how 'chivalrous' I am.)

"Hey, Naier." And I felt something shaking me, I turned around to see Kohta with his hand on my arm. He was sitting behind me, like, literally behind me, as he was on the car's floor again, while Rei and Takashi were sitting next to him while Asami was pretty much sitting on Kohta. Saeko, Saya, and Shimada were sitting on the back seats, with Shimada on the left corner, Saya on the center and Saeko to the right..

"Uhh, yeah, I'm fine. No bites," I say as I make a thumbs-up before turning around to glance at the street ahead before turning to look at the group again.

"Maybe Saya is right, maybe we do need to tie you up to a chair, you scared us to death with your stunt." Saeko says right after.

"I had it all under control." I shrug as I look at her.

"Oh, really? Like when you ended up jumping inside a horde?" Saya asks right after, with her arms folded under her chest.

"It was, part of the plan?" I retort as I darted my eyes around, while Saya just kept staring at me with a frown.

"Look, it's..."

"Was killing that normal kid also part of your plan?" Shimada cuts me off and, well, that definitely made the chatter stop.

I didn't reply, I just stared at him...

(Well, this is going to be 'fun'.)

"I saw you doing it, the others were not out of the building yet, but I saw you." He added shortly after.

"You mean the 'kid' that let the corpses inside the mall? I warned him to walk away, he didn't listen, thrice. I got no sympathy for the ones that would let others rot, yet would turn and beg for help the moment they are pushed to a corner." I answered plainly, while the group just kept staring.

"You shot a kid!" Shimada shouts as he glares at me.

"A kid whose actions killed a number of survivors inside the mall," I answer back.

"He didn't know what he was doing! The kid might have been an idiot and caused the mall to get overrun, but he didn't actively try to kill anybody!" He shouts back.

(I am pretty sure he stabbed somebody in the manga.)

And you know, maybe I was a bit out of it. I mean, I didn't realize what Shimada was trying to do with one arm behind his back and towards the trunk. Until he actually pointed my Scar-H to my face...

"Care to ask the relatives of the dead mall residents if they feel the same?" I ask as I stare at the gun's barrel.

The rest of the group froze as the stand-off continued. And Shizuka, who was driving mind you, glanced my way, before turning to look back at the street. She then turned her head to me a second time in a flash with a short yelp, pressing on the brakes until the car stopped moving.

"Wha... what's going on here?!" She yelled as her eyes went wide.

(She seriously did not hear a thing?)

"That man is dangerous, he shot a kid in cold blood," Shimada says shortly after.

"What? There is no way... "

"He already admitted it!" Shimada cuts her off.

"Shimada. Lower that gun." Saeko said calmly as she kept glancing between me and Shimada.

"You don't understand, he's dangerous. How do you guys know that he won't turn against you the moment the situation does not suit him? He's willing to shoot a defenseless kid, who knows what more he's capable of!" He responds.

"You are blinded by rage, we've known Naier far longer than you, he wouldn't just go mindlessly killing people. So, again, lower, that gun." Saeko responds again as she tries to lean closer to Shinoda, not that she could do much with Saya in the middle..

"What are you going to do to him? Don't hurt him, he's a good person." Shizuka starts talking after Saeko as she looks between me and Shinoda.

"A good person?! No 'good' person would be fine with killing a kid! If you really believe that he is good, then he has you all fooled!"

Shimada shouts.

"Oh please, are 'you' giving 'me' a lesson on morality? Sir rapes-alot?" I groan as I narrow my eyes, Causing Tsunoda's eye to twitch as an angry scowl slowly crept on his face.

(I know you must not kick a hornet's nest, but, I couldn't resist...)

"You, get out of the car. I'm not traveling around with a murderer. But I'm not going to kill you." He points towards my door with his head as he speaks.

"Unlike you, I'm not a killer," He adds right after...

"Lower the gun, right now. I don't know who you think you are, but you won't be the one who gets to decide what happens here..." Saya then spoke up with a low hissing tone as she pressed her Luger's muzzle against Shimada's sides. The look on the idiot's face was almost comical.

(... Please don't fire off by accident...)

"The hell's wrong with you people! I am trying to help you! He is... "

"Dangerous?! Don't give me that shit! Everybody is dangerous now!" Saya shouts back, before continuing with a lower tone.

"And even so... If, if it wasn't for him... I, my parents... " Her eyes getting blurry as she spoke.

"Naier is the only reason that my home didn't get overrun! He nearly got himself killed protecting it! Protecting my parents! If he did all that just to fool me, then he has me fooled! Because I definitely trust him more than I trust you!" Saya kept on shouting, and, uh, honestly? It was kinda overwhelming. I mean, she was actually using my name?

Shimada turns his head towards Saya as she keeps pressing the gun against his sides. And, using the chance, I bolted forward, grabbed the gun's barrel and aimed it towards the hatch. Then, after

flipping the safety on, I pull it towards me. And the moment the gun's butt came in front of Shimada's face, I brought it straight down to his face.

Which was enough to make him let go of the gun to grab his nose.

"Now you get out of the car." Saya glares at Shimada as she speaks.

"Now!" She shouts and pushes Shimada with the gun before he could even open his mouth.

Kohta, who was now also aiming the Ar-10 at him, opens the doors and exits the car along with Rei and Takashi, closely followed by Shimada. With the 'good guy' out of the Humvee, Kohta and the other two then enter the car and close the door.

"Go." Kohta said to Shizuka the moment he entered the car.

Shizuka then drove a couple of meters...

"Uhh, stop the car... " Everybody in the group then turned to look at me again as I took Shimada's bat and exited the car. I then took off my bag and grabbed a bottle of painkillers.

(I'm helping a guy that almost raped Shizuka, and almost shot me. I must be wrong in the head...)

"I don't intend to forgive you for what you tried to do to Shizuka. But, I do believe that you wanted to help them now. Even if it was by getting rid of me. For that, you can have these... Now, don't make me regret this kindness." I say as I leave the bat and box of painkillers on the ground, Shimada is just staring at me like an idiot with his hand on his nose. I then talked a little bit quieter, so the rest of the group would not hear me.

"You might think I am a danger, and you might be right, I'm not going to tell you to think otherwise. But..." I glance back at the Humvee.

"If you really want to help, then don't hold this against them. They don't need any more enemies, their plates are already full enough as it is. And maybe, someday, they might need your help. I don't want to be the reason that caused you to turn your back on them." I turn around after I finish speaking.

"Oh, and one last thing," I say, I turn around again.

"If you want to find an evacuation center, look for a police station, they might have information on the locations you can go." I finished speaking before turning around again and walking back to the car.

The moment I enter it, Kohta speaks up.

"He pointed a gun at your face, and you are giving him painkillers and a bat?" He asks as he frowns.

"If he's really trying to help, even if that is by tossing me out, then it's better to show him that we are willing to work with him if he's not going to be a total dick. Or, I guess I just might be stupid after all." I say with a shrug.

And with that, the car started moving again.

(Killing. Should be a last-ditch effort, Shimada never got enough screen time for me to really understand if he is a good or bad person. Though, the fact that we had to nearly choke his ass to stop him from raping Shizuka makes him loses a lot of points for sure. But, I can't read minds, maybe he really believed that I'm a danger and wanted to help. Maybe he wanted me gone because I was the only one who threatened him after we immobilized him back at the mall. Whatever the case, you should never close a door unless you are absolutely sure that it needs to be closed, like with Shido.

And the kid... In the manga, other than the fact that he stabbed somebody, it clearly showed that he was unstable. What if he ended up in our group and then went crazy again?

But you know? I'm glad I was actually able to deal with Shimada somewhat peacefully. Might end up being a stupid decision in the long run, but at least it proves that I can still try to solve problems without shooting everything in the close vicinity.)

"Are we going to leave Shimada back there?" Shizuka asks.

"He brought this on himself," Saya answers shortly after.

"Well, yeah... but," Shizuka trails off before she can finish her sentence.

"The guy almost raped you, and you are worried about him?" Rei asks with a frown.

"But, he didn't seem like a bad person..." She replies softly.

"He tried to rape and you, and he tried to shoot Naier? That's not really something I like to call good traits." Kohta says right after.

"I know, and that was horrible... But, he said he wanted to help, maybe he just..."

"You trust people way too easily Shizuka" Saya cuts her off and Shizuka just lowered her head slightly and kept her mouth closed.

(Holy crabs, how kindhearted can you get?)

The group then kept on chatting with one another for some time until the Protagonist™ opened his mouth.

"Naier... " Takashi, who had kept quiet so far, speaks up. I turn around to see him staring at me. With Shimada gone, he was now sitting on the backseat, between Saeko and Saya... Lucky bastard.

"Are you hiding anything else from us?" He asks. Well, that's a 1 on the Charisma roll...

"Takashi!" Saya yells as she darts her head towards him.

"If it was not for Shimada, we would have never learned of any of this!" He shouts back.

(Aaand, of course, something must go to shit... Out of the pan and into the fire, can I ever have a break?)

"I am the leader of this group, I have to make sure that nobody is a danger. I don't want to have somebody inside that is keeping secrets from us, even more so if that secret is going around behind our backs and killing people!" He shouts as he turns to Saya, who just kept glaring at him.

"Takashi, stop, Naier is not our enemy, he helped us more times than I can count. Saya and I wouldn't have even made it out of the school if it was not for him." Kohta speaks up in my defense as he looks at Takashi, Asami next to him, hugging his arm as she darts her head around.

"And remember that when you went to save Alice, he shielded both of you from that flash bang," Saeko adds right after.

"A flash bang that Kohta used after Naier's order." He answers back.

I stayed quiet as Takashi kept 'talking' with the group.

(You know what boss boy? You're starting to tick me off, I want to see what you will really do when the whole group is against your actions, yet you are too stubborn to back down.)

"I killed Shido and Tsunoda" I answered casually, causing the whole group to turn towards me.

"After they got expelled from the Takagi Estate, I followed them and found out that they were going to return to the Estate and try to open the barricades as revenge. That was also the reason I was late after Saya's father returned to the estate." I add up right after. The rest of the group stayed quiet digesting my 'confession'. And after a short silence, the intrepid leader shoved his feet up his mouth again.

"... what else?" Takashi asks as he keeps looking at me.

"Nothing else" I answer back.

"And how do I know that you're telling the truth?" He narrows his eyes as he speaks.

Yet, before I could answer back with some witty sarcasm, I felt the car abruptly stop.

"Enough! I can't take this anymore!" Shizuka shouts as she turns her head to us.

She keeps staring between me and Takashi, her eyes slightly red.

"We can't just... !"

"I don't care! Just stop it!" She shouts, and Takashi closes his mouth. She then turns to look at the street as she grips the steering wheel.

"We need to find a place to stay before it gets dark... " She said with a cracked voice as she kept looking down the street.

I let out a silent sigh as I turned to sit normally at my seat, then put my hand in my pocket and took out the keys to the house me and Saeko stayed. I then lifted my hand between the two front seats.

"Saeko, would you please tell them how they can get to the house we found? For some reason I don't feel like talking." I say as I keep looking at the street ahead.

"I will... " Somebody takes the keys as I hear the answer, and shortly after Saeko instructs Shizuka to turn the car around and head towards the mall, as we were going in the opposite direction from the clinic.

(On the other hand, sometimes I feel like it would be better if I just whacked everybody in the head and be done with it...)

Unwanted luggage

(Hmm, I did remember to lock the gates, didn't I? Got to open them up and get the jeep with the corpses out of the way. Heh, I like how I keep saying 'I' all the time, why don't 'I' just let our glorious leader decide who does what? Ugh.)

I let out a silent sigh and slightly shook my head.

(Come on, hold it together, Naier, no need to be spiteful. Takashi is just surprised and is trying to protect the group... Albeit in a very retarded manner. Hah, really there's no need to fret about the matter, it will sort out eventually... Or maybe it won't. Well, what's the worst that can happen? Get kicked out of the group? And even if it does come to that, then I'll just play with the cards that I've been dealt with. Still, no matter what happens in the future, I mustn't add fuel to the fire. And, for some reason, I got this nagging feeling that Takashi ain't saying all the reasons for his little outburst.)

"We're almost there," Saeko speaks up.

"The doors should be locked, if you guys want to use the garage, there is a jeep in there with corpses inside." I say right after her.

"Alright, so, do not get too close, I will go with... "

"No need, I'll go." Takashi cuts off Saeko, before she could finish, causing the rest of the group to turn towards him.

"Are you sure? I have been there before." She asks as she looks at him.

"Yes, I'll handle this." He says as he extends his arm towards Saeko, who looked at his extended hand for a while, before giving him the keys with a short nod.

Once the house was twenty or so meters to our left, Saeko touched Shizuka's shoulder, causing her to stop the car and turn off the engine. Takashi then exited the Humvee and carefully went straight towards the gate of the house.

As this was happening, I noticed that Shizuka was glancing at me.

"Umm... I didn't know you had such a nice house, Naier." She says as she keeps glancing back and forth between the house and me.

"It's not mine." I answer back.

"Huh? But you had the keys?" She responds.

"Took 'em from a corpse." I answer shortly again.

"Oh..." She lowered her head and began staring at the steering wheel.

"Sorry... " She responds shortly after.

(God damn it, Shizuka, do I look like a guy who would own a house like that? Or are you actually trying to guilt-trip me here?)

I shake my head and turn to her.

"It's fine, I'm not mad, not even at Takashi, much less at you. Why the hell would I be angry at you to need an apology in the first place?" I ask as I tilt my head.

"Oh well, it's because... Uhm, you know because... umm." She just trails off as she keeps thinking for a reason that obviously did not exist.

"Relax, once everybody calms down, we'll sort this thing out." I say as I turn to look at the house.

Shizuka nods and turns to me with a slight smile.

"Oh, come on now, how can Takashi think that you're a danger to the group? I mean, just look at what's happening right now? All this crap, and you're still trying to cheer up Shizuka" Kohta says shortly after.

"A... This Asami agrees with Kohta." Asami, sitting next to Kohta, added right after with a nod.

"I guess it's true what they say, idiots do have a thick skull, seeing how you seem to be totally unaffected by the fact that it's your head on the line here... " Saya folds her arms as she turns to look outside the window.

"So... his thick skull saved your home?! That's amazing!" Alice, who was sitting on Rei's lap, asks excitedly as she tilts her head and then lifts both arms in the air in an excited manner.

"S... silence munchkin! And I said that it's Big Sister for you!" Saya seems to almost be leaping at Rei as she grabs Alice by her cheeks and starts pulling them.

"Gah, hey! Take it easy, Saya! You're going to crush me!" Rei shouts as Alice and Saya begin excitedly moving around, and as the group's atmosphere begins to lighten up. A strong bump on the door next to her quickly hushed the festivities. We turn to the noise, to see a corpse that had planted its bloodied face on the window.

"Mood killer... " I say as I stare at the corpse.

"Tell me about it. But, well, we did get a bit, loud." Kohta says as he looks at the corpse that was grinding its face against the window as the rest of the group sat in silence.

Less than a minute later, we see Takashi opening the front gate, he then motions us to go to him. And so Shizuka drove up to the house, and the moment we got near.

"Oh! This Asami thinks we should use the firecrackers! That way, they won't just gather outside the house because of the car engine."

She says as she takes a couple of firecrackers out of her pocket.

"Huh, I guess in the end we didn't have to use them at the mall because Naier came with the Humvee right after we exited the building." Kohta adds right after.

"Hmm yeah, that is some good thinking there Nakaoka, we can use the car's hatch to throw them." Saya answers as she points at the hatch.

"Alright, and you can all call this Asami by her first name." She replies as she moves towards the hatch and pops out of it.

(Uhh, you know, I always thought that Asami was short, and it's just now that I actually realize that she is about the same height as Saya. Who, well, is actually the shortest one in the group, with Saeko being the tallest. Actually, how tall am I? Hmm, about the same height as Saeko I guess? Didn't really bother checking before.)

Seconds later, I hear the sound of firecrackers going off behind us as the car enters the house's front yard. The garage door was open, but the other car was still there, and the back exit of the garage, the one that leads to the backyard facing the ocean, was also open. Takashi then walked up to the driver's door.

"I pulled the handbrake, you should be able to push it out of the garage with our car." He says as he points at the SUV.

Shizuka nodded and slowly drove towards the silver SUV, softly bumping it with our Humvee, moving it along. As the car started to move in reverse, I noticed that the Boat was still attached to it, and was starting to turn to the right.

"The boat will block us like this... wait, I'm going to push the boat away." I say as the Humvee stopped. I then exit the car, run-up to the back of the SUV, quickly detach the trailer holding the boat and start pushing it as I walk towards the back exit of the garage, taking the

trailer along with me. The moment I got out, I turned to the right before leaving the boat in the backyard.

(Huh, that was surprisingly easy. Is the boat really that light?)

"Guess you will have to wait here, huh." I muttered under my breath as I looked at the wooden boat.

Finished with that, I turn around to see the silver SUV pop out of the garage. It then kept rolling until it pushed up against the back gate, which started slightly tilting towards the outside. I then walked back inside the garage to see the rest of the group getting out of the Humvee.

"Well... I'll be on the second floor, second room to the left. Do tell me if you decide to chop my head off, throw me out of the window or something. Oh, don't forget to close the door and lock the gates, have fun." I say as I move towards the door that leads to the living room and waved my hand at the group as it stood behind me.

(I know I said to myself to not be spiteful. But, UGHH, could not resist...)

I started taking off my bag and guns as I kept walking, leaving everything on the big table before climbing up the stairs. I then head straight into the kid's room, entering the room after taking off my shoes. Better late than never, right?

I close the door behind me and turn to look at the room. The bed was in front of me, it's head' touching the wall to my left. Beyond the bed, straight ahead of me, was a relatively big window, a desk next to it with some textbooks and a lamp on it. On the other corner of the room, an expensive-looking PC on another desk.

The wall opposite of the two desks consisted solely of wardrobe doors.

"Well, I'm home... heh," I say as I lift my hands and instantly let them drop.

I walk around the room for a bit before stopping by the window. I could see the boat in the backyard from here.

(I was aiming to somehow verify if we could get to the 'OVA island' with it. I mean, sexual hallucinations aside, if we blast that cave closed? A safe house with no corpses. Well, ok, there are still going to be some corpses around, but if you can somehow root them out, then the place will be clear. And worst-case scenario, you can just cause controlled 'forest' fires. Corpses light up like Christmas trees after all, and do die from fire. Plus, it would be much easier to gather them all in one location, as the place has no real walls to block them. Except if they're so retarded that they can actually end up getting stuck on tree trunks. Though, lighting up a forest fire there would mean that you'll either need to have a gas mask on, or be prepared to wake up married to a broom.)

I let out a slight chuckle at the stupid joke and shake my head.

(But, now, that has to be postponed until a certain 'somebody' stops being a hardass.)

I take a couple of steps towards the bed, before sitting on the corner of the bed.

(Jokes aside, if they do kick me out, what do I do then? Uhh, I can either take the boat and go to the island by myself, or find where Takashi's mom works at and go there. It was supposed to be an evacuation zone, and in the manga, Shido ends up there... Something that obviously won't happen now.)

My thoughts then got interrupted as I heard the door open behind me, turning around I see Saeko closing the door behind her.

"I fail to believe you all made a decision this fast," I say as I turn to look back at the window.

"We have not even started talking yet," She replies as she walks over to the bed and sits next to me.

"And you won't be part of it?" I ask.

"I will... but, I just wanted to see how you are doing. And... She stops talking in the middle of her sentence and lowers her head.

"Ask why I never mentioned this to you?" I ask again as I turn to look at her.

"Yes... but mostly to apologize that I didn't do anything to stop Shimada." She responds.

"You didn't, 'didn't do' anything, you couldn't. You couldn't have done anything. There is a big difference there," I say as I keep looking at her as she just smiled slightly at my answer.

"So, Naier, why did you not tell me? You do not trust me...?" She asks as she turns to look at me.

I take a deep breath as I take off my mask and balaclava.

(Better if she can see that I mean what I'm about to say.)

"No, I trust you, but I didn't... I didn't want you to believe that the reason that I said that I want you with me is because I've done worse than you. I would still have said the exact same thing to you, even if I hadn't killed any of them." I kept staring at her eyes as I spoke, and she didn't react as she just kept staring at me.

"And, well, there was a second reason." I say as I look away.

"Which... was?" She leans slightly towards me as she asks.

"I didn't want to make the whole thing look like a competition of who had it bigger. I was afraid I might, lose...." I said as I tried to keep a straight face while turning to her. But, uhh, ok, I ended up smirking in the end.

Saeko stared at me for a couple of seconds before bringing her hand up to her mouth, holding herself back from laughing.

She then placed her free hand on mine, while still keeping the other hand over her mouth, and 'bumped' her head on my shoulder.

"I, will stay with you. Even if the group decides to kick you out, I will stay with you as long as..." She kept her head lowered as she spoke.

"I keep my promise." I cut her off as I put my free hand on her head and ruffled her hair.

She stayed like that for a couple of minutes before getting up after taking a deep breath. She smiled at me and turned to leave without saying anything else, meanwhile, I put my balaclava and mask back on. Yet, the moment the door started closing, I could hear Saeko speaking with someone outside.

"Uhh... we're all eating, and since nobody seemed to bother, I..." I hear a female voice from behind the half-closed door.

"I am sure he will appreciate the gesture." I hear Saeko reply to the other person.

"I uhh... I'm doing this just so he won't end up starving, you see, no other reason." The other voice answers.

And seconds later.

"I... I'm serious, so stop looking at me like that!" The same voice says with a much higher volume.

Well, with so much tsundere-ism dripping from the voice, it wasn't much of a surprise when I saw Saya walking through the open door.

With her face slightly red, she walked over to the desk with the books and left a tray with a plate of food on it, before turning around

and started marching back out of the door. All without looking at me at all.

"Thanks." I say as she heads towards the door.

"We're all eating, I didn't..."

"For stopping Shimada," I cut her off.

She stopped at the door, but didn't turn to look at me.

"I can't let them kick you out..." She whispered to herself in a very low tone.

"B... because you're an idiot, and you wouldn't survive a day without me!" Saya shouted before I could ask what she was talking about, then bolted out of the room. And right before the door closed, I saw her going into the upper floor bathroom, her face beet red.

I chuckled at the antics of the local tsundere, before turning to look at the food.

('Wouldn't survive a day without you', huh? Heh, I guess that was Saya's way of saying 'I won't let them kick you out, because I'm worried about you'.)

I take off my 'face attire' again and sit by the desk that had the plate on.

(Shame she reverted back to calling me an idiot again, but, eh, one step at a time. I mean, I still remember how it went the first time I 'met' her. 'Hey, idiot, are you deaf?' And all because I was in her way on the stairs. Wonder if she even remembers that.)

I found myself chuckling as I took the chopsticks that were next to the plate and started eating.

After I finished my food, I went to the upper bathroom to clean the plate... Don't judge, going downstairs now would have been way too

awkward.

After finishing the chore, I started taking a closer look around the room. Did you know that this kid had seven different handheld consoles? Yeah, did you know that none of them worked now? Yeah, and here I thought I'd found the jackpot...

I then searched the wardrobes next, and I couldn't help but raise my eyebrows at what I found.

The one that was right next to the door had a butt-load of Tuxedos, ties, a couple of shiny shoes and other formal shit, all 'grown-up' size. Definitely not something in the size and style that a child would wear.

The next one had other adult-sized clothing, most of it being Adidas-styled exercise pants and shirts, things that you could go for a run with, or perhaps as the prescribed uniform of a Russian gopnik, though it was still missing the beanie hat a bottle of vodka, and the will to put a jet engine in your BMW.

Finally, the last one was filled with kid's clothing... talk about wardrobe invasion. Two out of the three wardrobes in the kid's room were filled by the parent's clothes.

And after I finished snooping around? After that, I tried to remember a moment in my life that was more boring than right now. And? And I couldn't find anything...

-Sometime later-

I was sitting on the office chair, my legs against the bed, looking at the ceiling, the sun long since having given up and diving into the sea...

(It's ten-thirty? And we've arrived here, about Seven?)

I groan as I look at my watch, then rock myself on the office chair...

(Three hours. They've been down there, for three fucking hours)

"I'm boooored!" I push the chair with my legs, making it slide across the room.

"You're under arrest, for being a Ninjaaa!" I spin on the chair, ending up with my feet on the wall opposite of the bed, pushing off of it to return to my 'original' position.

"A PC made for gaming, and I can't play anything because some genius decided to push a button and launch H.A.N.E. missiles. I'm so going to sue their asses, if I survive this whole mess." I found myself chuckling at the silly image as I stared at the dead computer.

"Ugh... Fuck my life." I groaned as I leaned on the chair and began staring at the ceiling.

"The group downstairs is freaking out over my actions, well mostly Takashi, and here I am cracking jokes. Maybe I am nuts, after all." I slowly spun around with the chair as I kept staring at the ceiling.

"Uhh... why can't they just make a decision? Waiting like this with nothing to do is just horrible, it almost felt like going to the doctor. You spent five agonizing hours, and three of these five hours are actually just waiting for your execution. If you're going to kick me out, then just do it, so I can kick you before I get kicked." I groan as I close my eyes.

"Oh, I'm also going to steal your samurai," I chuckled before taking a deep breath.

"Maybe I should just go to sleep, it's already dark out, and if they decide to kick me out while it's dark, then I'll have another bone to pick. Hmm, I don't feel like stripping down before sleeping, though, for obvious reasons. And, sleeping with my clothes on, is... not a good idea."

I get up from the chair and go to the wardrobe with all the Adidas look-alikes.

"Well... you lot just got demoted to P.j.'s!" I grab a pair of black pants and a full-sleeved shirt, before glancing at the closed door. Expecting someone to come barging into the room as I began taking off my clothes.

"Yeah, as if..." I chuckled to myself and changed clothes, leaving the ones I wore on the office chair, then ran straight to the bed before jumping and performing an elbow drop.

In retrospect, it was a very bad idea. Too bad that I only realized it after the bed decided to fight back and bounced me to the side, ending with me face flat to the floor with a loud thud.

"Owww... fuck." I lift my head and shake it.

"Got owned by a bed..." I chuckled as I casually looked under the bed, half expecting to find a bag with some hidden treasure in it. Yeah, there was nothing. What I did see, though, was the door to the door to the room swinging open, and a pair of legs.

"Naier?! What happened! Are you alright?!" A female voice shouted the moment the door opened.

I pop my head over the bed to see Saya, uhh... with no pants. Well, she was technically wearing 'pants', if you can call what she's wearing that. They looked like the ones she wore in Rika's house. She was also hugging a pillow with one hand, the other hand on the door's handle. Oh! And her hair was down.

There might be no lights, but the moon gave enough illumination for me to be able to see clearly.

"All's good. I, uhh... did I wake you up? If so, sorry, didn't mean to." I say as I keep staring at her.

(Oh, you slipped there Saya, you called me Naier again.)

"Uhh... no, you didn't wake me up, everybody just went to sleep a couple of minutes ago. I'm... I'm here to tell you that, we haven't decided on... that." She was slowly talking slower and slower as she went on, to the point that she stopped and shifted her eyes away from me.

"Hmm, I see..." I replied quietly as I kept staring... Yet, she did not move, nor did she try to cover herself more, she just stayed by the door, holding it open, while hugging a pillow. Her face was looking at... well, anywhere but my direction.

"You gonna sleep here?" I ask and Saya darts her head to me and goes beet red.

"W... well, everybody has gone to sleep and there are only four bedrooms. Kohta and Asami took one, Rei and Takashi another, while Shizuka took the other bedroom with Alice and Saeko. And..." Her face kept getting more and more red as she spoke, her eyes darting all around the room, not once focusing in my direction.

"Well, I guess it's only fair that I don't hog the bed, no?" I say.

"Yeah... yeah, that's right!" Saya nods, multiple times.

"Want me to sleep on the chair?" I ask as I point at the office chair.

"Uhh... you won't be able to sleep there, Naier. And... uh, if you can't stay awake tomorrow, it will end up being my fault. Uhm... you... you can sleep on the bed. B... but don't let it go to your head!" She raises her voice slightly at the end, as she turns to stare at me.

"Of course." I say as I get up from the floor and dust myself off. Not that the floor was dusty to begin with, but, you know, habits.

"Uhh... what are you wearing?" She asks as she raises an eyebrow.

"What I'm...? What are YOU wearing?" I asked back before pointing at her... everything. And she lowers her pillow slightly, not that it helped, as now, it was the 'upper parts' that were revealing.

"Quit staring, you pervert..." She narrows her eyes as she tries to hide herself behind the pillow, her face still as red as ever.

In response, I just flop on the bed and crawl under the covers while facing the window.

A couple of seconds later, Saya finally walks into the room closing the door behind her, then, I feel the bed moving.

"If you turn around, I'm going to punch you." She says quietly as the bed slowly stops moving.

(Jeez, what a violent one this person is.)

"Did you manage to search the electronic store back at the mall?" I ask without turning around.

"Uhh, yeah, I found a couple of working flashlights, and some decent walkie-talkies that still worked, but I don't know if they can still reach their max advertised distance. I have them in one of our bags." She replies.

"I see... thanks. And, good work Saya" I answered.

"Thanks..." She replies a couple of a second later with a voice equal to a whisper.

I give one last glance at the watch I left on the nightstand, before getting comfortable on the bed. And after that, we went to sleep.

Feels damn good sleeping on a bed again, though. It's quite the luxury, as it seemed I had made a habit of sleeping in places that are not really meant to sleep on. Car seats, recliners, floors, and ok, I do know that a person can sleep 'anywhere' if need be. But, uhh, you get the point.

So, I guess it was a nice change of pace being comfortable for once, soft pillow, soft sensation on my back, soft bed, warm blanket. Call me weak all you want, but a good night of sleep can make quite the difference when push comes to shove.

With that last thought, I fell into the darkness...

-Unknown time later-

...

(My face feels heavy...)

I opened my eyes to see my hand covering my face.

(Wow, I passed out cold as soon as my head was on the pillow. Plus I can't even feel my hand...)

I lift my other hand, pull it out of the covers and land it on my face, well mask.

(Forgot to take off my mask again? Huh... figures.)

I then intertwine my hands and stretch them out with a yawn, popping them out with some satisfying crack while still laying down. Then, I look at my hands, both of them, and then at the hand that was on my face, I mean mask.

(One, two, uhh... three?)

I blinked and looked at the hands, and counted again... still three. I turn my head as I follow the arm that the hand belonged to, and end up bumping my mask against Saya's nose.

She reacts with a quiet moan, nuzzling against my neck as she lowered her head.

(Uhh, ok, this is happening? I'm pretty sure I'm not dreaming, so uhh... did she move in her sleep?)

As I slowly took off the blanket, I also realized that she had passed her other arm under me, as I could feel it under me.

(She also somehow managed to sneak her arm under me while asleep? I smell foul play here. Saya is either a sneakier Ninja than me, or she really moves a lot in her sleep.)

I silently get off the bed as I lift her head, then slowly place it on a pillow before covering her back up. She didn't react through all that, other than moaning once again before hugging her pillow. I then pick the wristwatch to look at the time.

(Five A.M? Hmm, it was ten and something before I went to sleep, so I slept for about six or seven hours?)

I turned to look at the window to see that it was still dark outside.

(Heh, I remember when six hours of sleep were nowhere near enough. While now, I feel just perfect.)

I slowly walk towards the door as I give the sleeping Saya one last glance.

(That sure was a nice way to wake up, though. Let's see if the rest of the day will go this well.)

After a quick visit to the bathroom in order to wake myself up, I went down to the first floor and the first thing I noticed? Saeko. She was asleep on the recliners, yeah, the same recliners we slept on when we were here last time. As I walked up to her, I saw that she was also covered with a blanket and was hugging a pillow, so I guess she didn't sleep here on a whim.

(Uhh, Saeko had shown to occasionally 'restrain' herself in the manga. Like when she started calling Takashi by his last name after Rei started getting a little bit 'too' jealous. So, don't tell me that she actually decided to sleep with Shizuka because I told her that I also like Saya...)

I kneel down next to her and pat her head as she reacts with a soft groan as she tries to hide her face deeper into the pillow.

(Great, now I'm feeling guilty. Uhh, I have to figure out a way to solve this conundrum, so I don't end up hurting them both.)

As I turn around, I notice a shadow outside the window behind me, next to the small hallway that leads to the front door. Takashi was going outside, straight to the front gate?

(And, making the two of them split from the group ain't what they need. So you know what? Let's start by finishing this little shitshow, let's see if the others talked any sense into our glorious leader. If they didn't? Well, I will... But first...)

I got up and walked up to the kitchen. I glanced around the place to see the textbook that I had given to Saya at the estate next to a bottle of water, a metal cup, and a couple of unopened soda cans.

Checking the opened textbook, I spotted 'Creating ice' written in large writings at the top of the page. Under it, were several lines marked with a different number of asterisks.

The first one, a damn fridge with one asterisk next to it...

Next, portable ice maker and two asterisks next to it...

Then, cold season nights with three asterisks next to it...

And lastly, vacuum pump and bell jar with four asterisks next to it...

Under that, a wall of text, each with a different number of asterisks in the front, that explained in detail the how-to on each mentioned plan. Yeah, even on how to use a fridge. Does Saya really think that we are THAT stupid? Actually, I don't want to know. And finally, under all of that, with a different colored pen, 'Ice and salt make for better refrigeration' was written.

I flip through a couple of pages, looking at some of the other things written in the textbook, some pages even had drawings. From how to connect cables correctly to how to identify edible mushrooms and even a drawing of them.

(Holy shit, Saya can draw... And her handwriting is amazing, makes me want to rip the first couple of pages as they were pages that I filled.)

I let out a silent chuckle and flipped back to the ice-making page, before taking the two closed soda bottles and turning towards the window.

(We should be glad that much of the population is now, well, dead, at least we still have running water because of that. The hydration system is dependent on electricity, after all. I guess, the only reason we still have water is because it's left in the 'pipes' or the main reservoir or something? And with a lot of people being mindless meatbags, it means that they ain't going to be using the water taps. Or, I think it might be something like that? Don't really know how this type of infrastructure works.)

Once I got to the window, I stopped and stared at Takashi's back. He didn't seem to have realized I was there yet. I slowly open the window and crawl out, sneaking up behind him.

(I really want to go all boogeyman now, but uhh, if he starts screaming like a little girl right now... Yeah, let's not do thaaa... ?)

I stopped right in my tracks before staring incredulously at his shoulder. I'm pretty sure that his shirt was black, but, I'm sure that that white 'thing' I was seeing stuck there, was not part of 'his' attire.

(Is that what I think it is?)

I walked up next to him, to the point that he finally realized that I was next to him, he looked... rather surprised actually.

"Life is hard, eh? It's warm, probably tastes like shit and will actually make you even thirstier, have one" I say as I pass one of the cans to Takashi, which he takes it without much of a fuss.

"Must still taste better than warm beer, people always say it tastes like crap when warm," He says as he opens the can and takes a sip.

(He seems rather calm now, wonder if sleeping cooled him off. Or if the soundproofing in these rooms is 'that' good. Still, this could be a perfect chance for the two of us to talk.)

"I don't get you, Naier. You go out of your way to help a guy that just pointed a gun at your face, all because you believed that he wanted to help us. Us, as in the group. Even then, you keep trying to act like a lone wolf, despite the fact that you are now part of a team. It's not just killing Shido and the kid that's bothering me, the thing with the power plant too. You didn't even warn us, or even tell us what you were planning to do. Even, even if we wouldn't be able to do anything like you said, we would still be willing to at least try." He starts talking first, looking at the corpses walking around beyond the front gate.

"And, I, don't really know if you have done anything else behind our backs either... The group made it pretty obvious to me that they trust you, but try to see this from my side. Say that you end up turning on us, if a member of the group dies because of that, it will be my fault because I let you do things behind our backs." He turns to me as he speaks.

I let out a sigh, and then took a deep breath before speaking.

"Takashi, if I was to 'turn' on the group, me going off by myself, or shooting the ones that deserve to be shot wouldn't really affect that outcome." I say as I look at the front gate.

"Of course, but we would still have a better chance of realizing it if you didn't disappear every five minutes." He says as he also turns to look at the gate, and I let out a chuckle.

"So, you do admit that the reason you don't want me going by myself is because you want to keep tabs on me?" I ask.

"Naier, it's because of your own actions that I 'need' to keep tabs on you. Out of the rest of the group, you seem to be the most... unpredictable." He answers without turning to look at me.

(Oh, you wish? You better hope I will do a good job on keeping Saeko's 'needs' in check, or you will be in for a rude awakening, buddy.)

"Well, no matter how this ends, some things won't... no, can't change. If there's somebody that I deem a threat, I will act accordingly, whether you like it or not. Even the filthiest and evil of actions are going to go unpunished now, and people will take advantage of that. Call it fighting fire with fire if you want to." I turn to glance at the house behind me as I speak.

"Just... answer me one thing, Takashi. That outburst yesterday... Was it solely because of what you said to me just now?" I added before Takashi can say anything.

"Huh, what do you mean? What...?" He turns to me, a confused look on his face.

"It's about how you feel about Saeko and Saya..." Takashi blinked several times before he realized where this was going, and he looked away.

"You asked me the same question, and after we returned from the clinic, you kind of forgot that everybody else existed. You became so obsessed with Saeko that it was actually kind of sad to watch." I say as I fold my arms.

"I... I did?" Takashi turns to me and raises both eyebrows, completely surprised.

" Yes, you did..." I answered as I tilt my head slightly.

(Well, actually, you didn't, all you did was warn her that what she did was dangerous, while ignoring the fact that I was there as well. But, I'm also gambling with what I know from the anime in this, so...)

Takashi stays quiet for some time, before chuckling.

"Am I that obvious?" He asks with a slight smile as he looks away.

"Uhh, I mean, come on. She is kind, strong, pretty, and uhh, I kind of saw her in nothing but an apron and a thong, yet she acted like it was all fine. What was I supposed to think...?" He says as he begins staring at the can.

"And, uhh, Naier, can you do me a favor? Don't tell Rei I'm saying any of this, she will skewer me alive." He adds right after as he keeps looking at the can.

"You know that you can just kick me out of the group if you want to make sure, right?" I say as I fold my arms with a grin under my mask, as Takashi shakes his head, chuckling.

"Really, are you joking? Saya has been practically ignoring my existence ever since coming here. I can't even remember the last time she was this pissed at me. And Saeko, after everybody turned in for the night, she pretty much declared that she will stay by your side, no matter what I or the group decide. Kohta is flatly against it too, and even Shizuka was mad at me, if you can believe that. Kicking you out would destroy the group, it's just... " He says as he turns to look at the gate.

"You bit off more than you can chew, and now you can't just back down after raising a ruckus because it will make you look weak as a leader?" I say as I look at the gate as well.

"Uhh, something like that. I'm really not cut out for this leader crap, am I? You sure you don't want to take the spot? Everybody in the group already likes you, as you can see..." He says as he tilts his head from left to right before turning to me.

"Dude, weren't you just trying to kick me out? You just jumped from one side of the scale to the other. And no, there's no way I'm taking that job. Being a good leader isn't about being liked. Sure, it's important. But, being able to make decisions without stuttering is what really counts. And so far, you seem to be able to... even if some of them are, kinda... meh." I say as I turn to him when he doesn't respond.

And after a minute of uncomfortable silence later...

"Ok, tell you what, I'll meet you halfway here. I won't go 'lone wolf', as you say it. But, don't expect me to change the way I... deal with people that I deemed a threat. Even if you disagree with me, that won't be changing. And, if you want me to change some of my behavior, you have to promise me something..." I stare at him as I speak.

"Don't worry, she already made it clear with me who she wants to be with, I don't intend to try anything stupid. And... you're right, some people are beyond saving, I won't disagree with that" He cuts me off.

"Heh, good to see we agree on that at least. But, no, that was not what I wanted you to promise me..." Takashi raised an eyebrow as I paused.

"To first answer the question you asked me at the Humvee about Saya and Saeko. If you have not realized it yet, I do like them... more than I like myself, in fact." I say as I keep straight at Takashi.

"So, you have to promise me, if something does happen to me, you will take care of them." As I finished, Takashi seemed to flinch back, before sighing and making a weird expression as he looked at me. Something between worried and annoyed?

"Naier, come on, really? What are you...?"

"You. Will. Stop them. From doing anything crazy... And I don't mean by taking advantage of the situation, either, especially if you are not

even sure if I'm alive or dead. I don't think I need to explain why now, do "?" I cut him before he could speak up and stare at him.

"Only if you'll also watch after Rei if something happened to me. Same deal with yours... oh, and no more secrets." He says after a long sigh and stares back at me.

I extend my arm to him.

"Truce?" I ask.

"I'd prefer to have friends in my group... And I'm sorry about yesterday." He takes my hand for a western-style handshake.

And as the sun begins to rise, I can't help but make a quip as he looks ridiculous with that 'thing' on his shoulder.

"I can live with that... And, uhh, are you gonna keep walking around with that on your shoulder? Quite bold of you if I do say so. Don't know if the girls will approve, though." I say with a slight smirk as I point at his right shoulder.

Takashi tilts his head questionably as he takes a sip of the soda and grabs the item with his left hand, bringing it to his eyes, and his eyes go wide. Something in my brain then screamed at me to get out of the way. So, I instantly leaned away while moving out of the way.

"PPPF TT!" And the Soda that Takashi just sipped came out the same way it came in.

"I think Rei will be looking for those... and you kinda just washed them over with soda. I mean, those belong to Rei, right?" I say as I look at him.

"Uhh, about the no secret thing... Can we keep this as an exception?" He said as he looked at me with an awkward expression.

"Well... Look at the bright side. At least we didn't end the chat in a depressing manner." I say with a chuckle, not really answering his question.

"Can I still kick you out of the group?" He 'asks' me as he turns.

"Nope, too late for that, we're friends now. BUT. That doesn't mean that you can go and get all freaky with Rei on my bed, though..." Takashi glances between me and the uhh, soaked panties, before he starts going red. I chuckle and turn around, heading back towards the window, open it and jump back inside. Leaving Takashi alone in the front yard to stew in his embarrassment.

Saeko was still sleeping, so I silently walked along the room, leaving the still closed soda can on the table.

After a quick scan of the room, I found the keys for the Humvee on the same table, which I took and went straight to the garage. Once there, I went to the Humvee, unlocked the back door and took a shirt, a pair of pants and a new jacket, and you know, socks and underwear.

(Well... that went smashingly, good job me, if I do say so. Still, it's weird, Saya charged into my room the moment I hit the floor, yet nobody heard Takashi and Rei getting 'personal'? Hmm, don't tell me she was actually peeking through the door or something? If she did, there goes my cool persona.)

I throw the clothes over my shoulder and head straight to the second floor after locking the car, my face slightly heating up by the idea that somebody was looking at me while I was being, uhh... stupid.

The moment I arrived, I went straight to the bathroom. Or, I was going to at least, until I heard a voice coming over from my room, and I noticed that the door was slightly open.

(Hmm?)

I glance around the hallway and walk up to the door.

"Stupid, stupid, stupid, ugh." I could hear Saya speaking from inside the room.

"He wasn't supposed to wake up before me! Ahh! Why didn't I move back before falling asleep? God, I'm so stupid!"

I glance around again to see if there's anyone that could see me here.

(Uhh, interesting... But, am I really going to eavesdrop on Saya? And to think that I just thought that she might have been eavesdropping on me before. Uhh, come on man, show some class.)

As I'm about to move away, Saya continued to talk loudly.

"Ok, ok, Saya, think of a good excuse! Ok, I just moved in my sleep! Yes, that would work! I moved around in my sleep, and then when I woke up, found that he wouldn't let me go... So I just fell asleep like that..."

And I end up moving back to the door to eavesdrop some more. Don't blame me, she was acting way too cute for me to just ignore it.

"Ugh no, no, no, that sounds horrible! Like I just gave up and decided it was fine to sleep like that... Even though it was indeed comfortable... Ahh! Quit daydreaming, you stupid idiot! Uhh, I will just say that I moved around in my sleep... Yes! Just that, plain and simple. Ugh, why couldn't he just stay asleep for a bit longer?" After that, I started hearing some ruffling, and I quickly moved away.

(Yeah, ok, let's go before we get caught here.)

I silently head to the bathroom sporting a smirk on my face.

After taking a quick bath, with relatively cold water, and changing to my new clothes, I exit the bathroom and turn back to the kid's room, which was still slightly open.

After a small knock, I open the door, finding Saya on the bed, sitting and wrapped up in the blankets.

"Morning," I say as I casually walked into the room and headed towards the chair with my old clothes.

"M... morning." She says as she stares at me, her face going slightly red.

I take everything out of the pockets of the dirty clothes and put them in the pockets of my new pants.

(I left the guns downstairs, and I still took the ammo with me? Seems legit.)

"J... just so you know, the reason I ended up on your side of the bed was just because I moved around in my sleep..." Saya says with a huff as she tries to look serious.

(Aww, putting your rehearsal to use, I see. I really want to tease her here, but that can backfire horribly if she finds out that I was eavesdropping on her while hiding behind the door.)

"Yeah, figured as much, hope I didn't wake you up?" I say as I strapped the pockets closed and turned to her.

"N... no, I just woke up." She replies as she turns her head to look out of the window, hiding the lower part of her face under the blankets.

"Well, I'll get out of your hair then," I say as I move towards the door.

"Huh, where are you going? Won't Takashi get mad if you start wandering around?" She asks as she turns to me.

"Nah." I say as I go back out.

"No need to worry, Saya, everything is going to be fine." I add up as I turn back to her when she doesn't reply.

(Huh that's weird? Figured she would go all 'I'm not worried, you idiot! Now get out, so I can change or something like that?)

Seeing nothing to it, I close the door behind me and move to the first floor. Once there, I looked at the recliner to see that Saeko was not there, while Takashi was sitting by the big table with a glass of water in his hand.

"Told you, that crap will make you thirsty." I say, as I move towards the table.

"And yet, you were the one who gave it to me." He replies.

"I'm an evil overlord, after all. So, feeling corrupted yet?" I ask as I take a seat, Takashi chuckles and shakes his head.

"Uhh, not that I don't enjoy your company or anything, but where's Saeko?" I ask as I point at the recliner.

"The bathroom inside the study," Takashi replied, and I nodded.

"So, you all have a plan on how to act from here?" I ask and Takashi nods.

"The police station that is responsible for this region is the one that Rei's dad works at, so we will go there first. We decided that, some time ago in the mall, and we even had a 'vote' on it and everything, but we couldn't find you anywhere to let you know." He says as he looks at the glass.

"To find her dad?" I ask and he nods.

I then glance towards the backyard, towards where the boat should be at.

"Before we leave this place, there is something that is on my mind for some time." I lean slightly on the table as Takashi turns to stare at me.

"Based on what I know, and from what Saya had found out, these things can only hear and feel and not actually 'see'. But, the feeling part is a bit weird, as they seem to ignore inanimate objects entirely to chase after humans, so I don't know if it comes down to heat or something. And as I never had the chance to see how they react to a hot inanimate object, I can't really be sure. I do remember that they kept clawing at the Humvee's hood when I used it to block the hole in the estate. But it's not a good way to confirm anything..." I paused to see if Takashi was following me before continuing.

"Anyway, the reason I mentioned this, is because I think that they can't function well underwater. They probably can't drown, but if they also can't walk or swim, that means the only way for them to move under the sea is by current. So, as long as they are not already out in the deep-sea, they should not be able to 'move' by sea... But we can." I say as I point towards the boat outside.

Takashi narrows his eyes at me and lowers his head slightly as I get up and walk towards the window in order to get a better look at the boat.

"We do need to find a place that is permanently safe-ish from the corpses, don't we? Who knows when we will find another boat that can function without electricity." As I finished outlining my idea, I heard a door closing.

"Ah, good morning Saeko," As Takashi speaks I turn around towards where he's looking.

"Good morning..." Saeko was looking at me as she spoke.

"Morning Saeko. I'm sorry, but, could you please get the others? There is something that we need to discuss." I say as I look at the stairs that lead to the second floor before turning towards her.

She looks at me before glancing at Takashi, and nodding, then moves towards the stairs. The moment she left, Takashi and I returned to discussing the boat idea.

"Of course, such a decision should be a group decision, so we can decide what to do next based on what the whole group thinks. You can say that it was your idea, in case you think that saying it's mine might affect the vote outcome." I say as I walk up to Takashi and sit on a chair nearer to him.

"We should also tell them that I'm not kicking you out, before everybody starts giving me the cold shoulder. Or colder ones, at least." He drops his shoulders and shakes his head as he speaks, while I just nod in response.

A couple of minutes later the whole group was down, all of 'em that is, except for Rei.

"Rei said she can't come down right now..." Saeko glances at the stairs as she speaks.

(Hah! Called it! Hope she can still walk... And I do have to thank her, their private time probably calmed Takashi down enough to make him see how retarded he was being. Especially as it was partly because of Saeko that he... Wait! Uhh, does that mean that I almost got kicked out of the group because of Saeko? What a weird event, considering that she would be the first one to leave the group too should that happen. Maybe that's why Takashi backed out so easily? Ugh, human relationships are weird)

As I was deep in thought, Shizuka, with an oddly serious face, started speaking.

'Takashi... I will say it again, stop this now. It's..."

"It's alright, Shizuka," I cut her off before she could ramp up, as I raised my arm.

"No! Naier it is not. It's not r..."

"Naier is going to stay, we've... come to an agreement." Takashi was the one to cut her off this time.

"About time you see how stupid this whole thing was." Saya folds her arms as she glares at Takashi.

"Yes, yes, I'm sorry... I overreacted." He raises his arms in surrender as he speaks.

"But, I do agree with Takashi on something... I prefer it, if you no longer hide things from us..." Saeko added right after as she turned to look at me, and I found myself grinning.

"Ohhh? No secrets, huh? Ok, Takashi, why don't you go first? The 'thing' you told me outside?" I say as I point my thumb at him, and the whole group turns their attention to him.

"Huh! What!?" He turns to me as his eyes go wide.

"Yeah, no secrets!" Alice then ran up to Takashi and began tugging at his pants.

"Uhh, it's nothing really." He says with an awkward laugh as he shoots a glare at me.

"Ohhh, I want to know, tell me, tell me." Undeterred, Alice keeps tugging on Takashi's pants.

"R... really, it's nothing!" Takashi almost shouted, as he started sweating and turned to me with a glare.

"Ohhh! This looks fun! I want to know too!" Shizuka runs to him and starts tugging his shirt jokingly as she keeps giggling.

"Uhh, I swear I have no such secret! Naier is just messing with you all, right!?" He turned to me again... and began mouthing something.

'You promised!' He mouthed with his lips.

"No I didn't." I answer back with a smirk.

"Fine, if he won't be sharing it, I will. Ok, you see, Takashi told me that..." The whole group then turns to me, along with Takashi. His expression was difficult to explain... Something between glaring and pleading?.

'That the day the outbreak happened, he actually forgot to wear underwear, and he only realized it only after he exited his front door. In other words, he nearly welcomed the outbreak while going commando." I say as I fold my arms.

And then the group broke out into a cacophony. Laughing, scolding... and talking? I think it was a mix of all of the above.

And while the group was causing the commotion, Takashi leaned in my direction.

"Naier! What was that for!?" He asks me in a 'low' tone.

"Just count it as payback for what you dragged me through yesterday. I was bored out of my mind in that room with nothing to do, so now we're even." I say to him in a low tone.

"I thought you said that you were not mad!" He complained.

"I'm not," I respond as I turn to look at the boat in the backyard.

(Static electricity, you have my thanks.)

Fachoo!

"I can't believe i'm going to rate this place higher, compared to the apartment we were in a couple of hours ago... but i will..." Takashi looked at the sea, while sitting on the shack's steps... wearing his new uhh...'swimsuit'.

"Well Takashi, it all comes down to one simple fact." Kohta speaks up as he wiggled about in his own...'swimsuit'.

"Electricity." I add up as i follow the spinning table fan with my hand.

(Apparently, this place had a working generator... the fridges didn't work though, meaning the E.M.P obviously did have an effect on the shack. Still... i find it weird that the electrical grid here didn't get fried. While the generator was plugged out... and this place is obviously not connected to the main power grid... should it really be enough to spare it?... Hmm... well... i'm not an electrician... so i got no frigging idea... still... a working fan, means a working power outlet... so, if we find a working mini-fridge or an ice maker back in town? Fridge problem solved.)

"Yea... this place is like a paradise now, if you consider that most if not all of the apartments on the mainland got reverted back into the stone age." Kohta shoves his face in front of the fan as he speaks.

"Ahhhh, i missed technology..." He says right after, his voice getting 'cut' by the fan.

"Heh... true... so uhhh... Naier... i take it you won't change into a swimsuit after all?" Takashi asks as he turns to look at the two of us.

"If my choices are between, male stripper... and female highschool student?... Yea... don't take this the wrong way, but i'd rather swim with my clothes." I say as i chuckle and walk out of the shack, then

lean my back against the wall that was next to the steps and turn to look straight ahead, towards the sea.

"Hey, it's not my fault that the only thing they had was... this."
Takashi looks down at his poor excuse of a swimsuit as he speaks.

"You still wore it though. Then again... i guess your other choice was..."

"Female highschool student swimsuit!" Khota pops up from inside while making a peace sign.

"Uhh... Well, you don't seem to be too bothered wearing it" Takashi adds up as he turns to Kohta.

"Well, i think it suits you, proves that you are the disgusting geek that you are" Saya, who appeared behind Kohta, throws a casual toxic remark as she walks down the steps... in her own 'not very safe' swimsuit. The same one she wore in the ova, double hair buns and all. She then turns to Takashi and raises an eyebrow.

"This was the only 'male' swimsuit in the shack" He replies as he glanced at her... she makes a silent 'hmm' and looks around.

"I see... so... uhh... whe... where is Naier?"... Did i just sense... expectation in her voice?... Oh boy, she's going to be so disappointed... wait, did she called me Naier again?... And... how the hell did she even manage to fit her hair in these two buns?... They're way too frigging small...

"Uhh, right behind you..." Takashi answers.

She instantly turns around and...

"... You... didn't change..." She says in a low tone as she keeps staring at me... i think... her shoulders dropped ever slightly?

"Not going to wear 'that' thank you very much." I say as i point at Takashi.

"... You're at the beach idiot, you have to change to a..."

"Ahh, Having the chance to change out of these sweat-drenched clothes feels really nice." Saeko cuts Saya off as she also walks down the steps in her own 'ova' swimsuit... and... uhh...

(Keep staring Takashi... keep... staring, i won't strangle you in your sleep... propably)

She then turns to also stare at Takashi...

(... Great, and now they're staring at each other...)

"... Only... male swimsuit..." He says as his eyes start darting around.

"Hmm, is that so?..." She answers casually as she turns to look at Kohta... and then towards the sea... yet... she didn't turn around... in other words.

(She didn't see me either? Damn, my ninja skills are off the charts today.)

"Where is..."

"Naier is right behind you." Kohta cuts her off with a grin. Saeko then turns around and...

"... Aren't you... hot in these?" She asks as she looks at me.

(Ohh, taking the side road i see)

"Maybe... but i'd rather die from heatstroke rather than wear that thing." I say as i keep leaning my back against the wall and point at Takashi.

"At the beach, you wear a swimsuit idiot. That's the only damn reason they exist" Saya 'glares' at me as she puts her hands on her hips and leans forward.

"I do agree with Saya. Why be at the beach if you can't go for a swim?" Saeko adds up right after her as she tilts her head and folds her arms.

(Holy shit... they're actually working together for this?...)

"Uhh i 'can' go for a swim, my clothes won't explode after touching salt water... i think" I answer.

"But you'll ruin them, you should..."

"There's nothing to eat here..." Rei pops up and cuts off Saeko... just in time too... she was then followed by Shizuka, Alice and Asami... who by the way, was wearing a swimsuit much like Alice's, minus the frilly parts... though... i guess you could say it looked like more like Kohta's then? Except that hers was white.

The rest... went on pretty much like in the anime.

Shizuka started groping her chest, whining that there was nothing to eat and that her chest would start shrinking, Takashi and Kohta started staring... while i...

(Ok, what's with everybody walking down the stairs and turning their backs to me? I didn't know i was 'that' good of a ninja... huh... whatever... guess i'll just have to, OH holy shit keep eyes above waist level... way too many butts here)

Rei then got salty and started playing the damsel, followed by Shizuka... and shortly after Saya, Who also 'silenced' Saeko and Asami by dragging them along, as these two... didn't seem to have realized what the others were trying to pull.

(Well... i repaired for this)

I kick my self off the wall and walk back into the Shack.

"We will look for food!" The two guys respond not too long after.

"Oh! So dependable!... and... where do you think you're going mister! That includes you too!" Rei turns around and points at me as she speaks.

I open my bag and take one of the walkie talkies out along with a combat knife, then toss the bag over my shoulder and turn to her.

"Of course it does" I answer as i walk out of the shack and turn to Kohta.

"Kohta, with me, and grab a net." I say as i toss him the combat knife. He gets up and salutes.

"Sir, Yes sir!" And then runs into the shack.

"Takashi, i want to check the effective distance of these things, so if possible, start off by going in the opposite direction." I say as i toss him the radio, he catches it, gives it a quick glance and nods.

Less than a minute later, Kohta comes out of the shack, waving a small net he found.

"Perfect... so... let's go..."

Two hour or so ago

"So... we can use the boat to look at the nearby islands" Takashi looks at the group as he speaks.

"Do we have the time to waste on this?" Rei... then asked the most obvious question.

"My father should be at the Police station, we should go there first" She adds up.

"A police station... will either be evacuated, or it'll be a save zone, both don't have a real 'time limit'. I know that you worry about your parents, but if this trip is successful, we'll be able to actually help

your father after finding him" I say after Rei... she... turns to look at me.

(I had to spend a couple of minutes thinking what words i should use... one wrong step here and Rei could blow up at my face)

"Your father is a cop right?... So that means he'll probably try to help survivors, being it a group, or a community. A safe spot from them will be exactly what they'll look for after they get their bearings..." As continue speaking i see Saeko nod.

"Also, knowing that you have a safe place to return can help a lot with moral" Saeko speaks up after me.

"And if we find nothing, then we would have wasted our time." Rei folds her arms and frowns slightly.

"As much as, if the Police station is empty and with no clues" Saeko answers back... and Rei narrows her eyes as she turns to glare at her.

"Rei, if we don't go now, we might never go, as we're not taking that boat with us... it's too bulky and won't be able to drive in reverse effectively if we are dragging the boat trailer along" Takashi finally speaks up.

"But Takashi!" Rei darts her head to him as she raises her voice.

"Rei, i know how you feel... my parents are out there too..all of our parents are out there... but, just think how better it'll be if we find a place that's actually safe from them... we'll have a home again..." As he speaks, Rei lowers her head... and after a bit of silence, she lets out a sigh.

"... If you... believe it's what we should do first Takashi... then... fine... let's check the islands first... having a home again... does sound nice..." She answers before lifting her head to look at Takashi.

"Island" I correct her, causing the group to turn towards me.

"We only have one island that is nearby and is big enough to have a chance of sustaining people... the others are too far... and as we can all see, time is something that we really don't have right now... so, if it's overrun... we'll be back before the day ends... if that's the case, we can head to the police station today... alright?" I 'ask' as i look at Rei, She just nodded.

"Ok... so... lets get ready then..." I say as i walk away from the window.

"Remember, the boat is rather small... so... no ammo boxes." I say as i turn to Kohta who instantly started going towards the garage.

"Oh come on..." He drops his shoulders without turning to me.

"Take a box of dynamite though" I add right after.

"Dynamite?..What for?" Asami asks as she tilts her head.

"In case something needs blocking off, and as they don't really take a lot of space, they won't set us back on anything... also, my five-year-old self likes explosions" I grab my bag as i speak and head towards the stairs.

(I could say that we can use them to check for corpses... but, with the cave open... using dynamite on the beach... not a very smart idea...

Ok... so... things i'll need...

A knife to bribe Kohta to work for me at the 'food' crisis.

A pair of extra 'Adidas' clothes... as i'm NOT going to wear a fucking speedo.

Some food... for fishing. Dynamite for the cave... uhh... some bullets for the shotgun... what else?... uhh... i think i'm good... Ohh,

wait. I should ask Saya for a flashlight and the walkie talkies, we have to check how far they can reach, the island is perfect for that.)

And so, after going to my 'room' and getting some extra clothes, i went back down and packed some beef jerky from the fridge, then asked Saya for a flashlight and the walkie talkies, and finally, i got a combat Knife from the Humvee along with a handful of shotgun shells.

After that, we opened the back gate, let the silver SUV roll out of the way and brought the trailer with the boat on the cement dock.

And soon, we were 'sailing' the sea... i figured i would end up rowing with the other two... but... uhh... the group agreed with me when i said that i should be in the front to check the island with the binoculars that Kohta brought... which was good actually... as i know that there's a shack there, they don't... and in the end, i was able to spot the Shack from a relatively far distance...

Though, seeing that the island itself was one small beach and then nothing but tall cliffs... it wasn't too hard to spot... and the fact that it had only one 'sea entrance' meant that once the cave was blocked, corpses would have only that one beach as an entry point. If they somehow ended up in the open sea and drifted towards the island that is.

Now, after the reached the island? We instantly went to the shack... as the group had enough sun to last them... for the next couple of days... me?... Balaclava and mask for the win.

The shack itself was the same as the one in the anime, a small staircase that led the front part of the store. To the left, a 'room' that didn't have walls on the side that faced the sea and the adjacent wall to its left, a railing was placed there instead of the walls. Inside, a couple of seats and tables. To the right a register, two fridges and some hangars with swimsuits. Behind that register was a door that led inside.

The building it self started with a small room that had hangars with various swimsuits... and to the right, a door that led to the changing rooms. To the left, a kitchen... that was also linked to a bathroom... well i say kitchen, but all it actually had was a sink, a table next to that sink that i think... was to act as a kitchen counter? and a fridge... and that's about it, no actual stove to cook anything... or cupboards... hell, it didn't even have chairs.

Now, left to the shack, was a relatively wide sand path... and i think... it was the path that led to the cave..other than that. Behind the shack, after about twenty meters, started the greenery, trees, bushes, you get the idea... there was a wannabe fence set around the perimeter where the 'forested' area started, made out of cut tree branches and rope... flimsy looking, was probably set there before the outbreak, as i don't think it would stop a corpse if it decided that it wanted to pass through.

And finally, the jackpot... a working generator... and a working electrical grid, i nearly teared up when i saw the lights turn on after we plugged in the generator... and... another funny thing... i didn't expect it to be so... quiet. That alone made the group agree that this place was worth staying, even if corpses were on the island. And... speaking of the little shits, i didn't manage to see a single one so far... but sadly, i do know that as long as that cave is open... corpses can get here... now... if there 'are' corpses on the island?... i don't know...

In the anime, the group got quite... 'noisy'... and then they all passed out... yet no corpses appeared near the shack and the ones that did appear, were near the cave where Takashi passed out... so, i think our chances are pretty good... not that i will leave it on chance mind you... i am trying to blow up the cave after all.

I could also say that i have mixed feelings about settling near a plantation of hallucinogenic plants... but... ehh, i'm indifferent.

Present time

"There's a rock formation nearby. Saw it while we were closing in to the beach. It can act like a natural staircase to instantly dive in deep water..." I say as i point towards the 'cliff' to our right while we walked through the trees.

Kohta nods and turns to walk towards the direction i pointed, while i kept staring at the radio in my hand.

(... This thing... is... crap... i have been getting nothing but static ever since we passed what... a hundred meters?... I do hear a 'click' sound, which signifies that the radios still connect... but instead of a voice, all i hear is static...)

I press on the 'talk' button two times in quick succession as i tilt my head and narrow my eyes... and shortly after, i get two quick 'clicks' as an answer...

"Hm, Hm... yes, this place can work perfectly" Kohta nods with his hand under his chin after looking around the rocks... i... could actually see the girls and the shack from here... not clearly though as it was not what you'd call... near.

"And uhh... how are you going to hunt?... You're not gonna start... throwing dynamite in the water... are you?" He asks as he turns to me.

"Sounds fun... but no, that would ruin the ecosystem and in turn, any future food source from here." I say as i take off my bag, open it and toss the radio inside.

"Then?... Wait... don't tell me you can catch fish bare-handed..." He says as he attaches the knife to a branch and warps it with some vines.

"Yea, no... i'm not diving, you are..." I say as i take the jerky pack out of the bag, get up and hand it to him.

"Huh... you had food? i didn't know..."

"Don't eat them, use them as lure... no idea if it'll work... but uhh... worth a try." I cut him off and grab his hand before he could bring the slice to his mouth.

"As for what i will do? I gave you the equipment and the location, i can't do everything now can i?... Also, i don't want to give certain people the pleasure of seeing me with my clothes drenched..." I say as i turn to glance towards the direction of the shack.

"Uhh well... the equipment is half the work, so i guess we can share the spoils." He responds as he starts walking down the rock formation.

"I, i captain" I answer as i throw the bag over my shoulder and walk behind him.

"Hey... if i'm the captain... then why am i the one doing the dirty work here?" He asks.

"The crew needs to see your faith... otherwise... it's the plank" I say with a slight chuckle as i keep walking behind him.

"Huh, when did we become pirates?" He asks as he stops on the lowest rock, which was a relatively long and flat boulder that looked somewhat like an arrowhead.

"The moment you decided to become Rambo" I point at the red bandana on his head.

"Uhhh... fair enough... so... bombs away!" He shouts as he runs over to the corner and jumps to the sea.

I sit down on the edge and look at Kohta as he starts swimming around.

(Ok... so... let's go over the plan one more time...

For starters... i don't know how i can stop the whole hallucination thing... i have no idea how the leaves look, i have no idea where

Zeke found them... as apparently it was him that brought them in the anime... so i can't think of a good way to explain this... 'Hey, this place has hallucinogenic plants, i don't know where, i don't know how... i don't even know how they look. But i know that somebody will get them and we will end up fantasizing about weird shit'... heh.

I could, hypothetically, make Shizuka notice them before we start the fire, as she was the one that knew them by name... but that would create another problem. If the others won't get knocked out, then i won't be able to instantly storm off with the dynamite towards the cave... so it actually works in my favor for the group to fall asleep. That way they won't complain that i went by my self... or ask why i wanted to take the dynamite on a date with me around the island.

I will just have to make sure that the smoke won't affect me as much as the rest... Hmm... it's smoke so... i can detach the balaclava from the mask and submerge it in water, then put it over my mouth and nose... and hope that it works on the sort term... plus... i can just leave the moment i see the smoke rising... as once i move away from the campfire, i should be safe. As long as the wind doesn't decide to be a fucktard that is)

"This is no fun, i need a challenge!" I hear Kohta shout.

"Then go find an octopus or something!" I answer back without looking down.

"Ohh good idea!... Now i want to eat octopus! I hope somebody knows how to cook it properly!" The moment Kohta finished speaking, i heard the should of splashing... and then, silence.

I lie down on the rock, put my arms behind my head and cross my legs.

"Shame i can't let my self get used to this... tomorrow we will be back to 'run from the flesh-eating corpses' after all " I close my eyes as i speak.

(Still... how long till we finally find a safe place to stay?... In the manga the group headed towards the elementary school... their initial mission, which was to find their parents... will come to an end there... as both Rei's dad and Takashi's mom 'should' be there... Then what?... they get extracted and get sent to god knows where? It was mentioned in the police station that there would be an evacuation in the elementary school... well... in the manga, Shido managed to get there first... meaning there is a possibility that they didn't get extracted because... reasons...)

I open my eyes and glance around to see that nothing had changed, so i closed my eyes again.

(But now, i have another 'personal' problem to deal with... that being that we are close to the manga's end... after we return from here... we'll go to the police station... then head towards the elementary school... and find Rei's mother on the way... after that?... after that... i don't know... and that's the fucking problem here... i got too used to knowing what's going to happen... i'd be lying if said that i think that everything will go just fine)

I shake my head and let out a sigh.

(Still... we have one more member... we have the Humvee..and Shido is dead, so we won't have to deal with his shit in the elementary school... plus... the estate is still standing and even if they did leave and set base elsewhere, it's still an obvious positive... i would like to believe that all that will boil down to less crap coming towards our way after i no longer know what up to come... but that is just wishful thinking... ughh... best i can do... is be 'prepared'...)

And so... time passed like that... 'that' being... me doing nothing, not that i'm complaining mind you. I did keep whining that i wanted a break after all... Until... the sun started to paint the sea in an orange color.

(Well... about time we return)

I get up and start looking at the sea below me, until i saw Kohta surfacing.

"Alright cap, it's about time we returned, it's starting to get dark"
Kohta turns to look at me as i speak, and nods.

"I will swim to the shore from here, too high to climb up" He responds and dives back down. I nod, get up and start going back on foot.

The forested area i was in was rather small, so it didn't take too long until i was on the beach again, with the Shack being a straight line from me. The big forest, in other words, the deeper part of the island was actually to my right at the moment... not that i had any interest in going there though.

On my way to the Shack, i found Kohta waiting for me, so in the end, we ended up reaching our destination at the same time... right when Rei was chewing off Takashi... for not finding anything... i guess some things can't change...

"Sorry for being late!" Kohta shouts as he walks into the shack, making the group to turn to him... or well... us.

"Dinner is served!" He shouts with a grin and lifts a net full of fish... and after the girls were pretty much left with their mouths agape, he started explaining how he had special training the seventh grade with a member of SAS... you know... casual stuff...

"Wow... Fish!" Alice shouts.

"Heheh, good job Kohta!" Asami giggles right after.

"Well... at least somebody is useful..." Saya turns to look at Takashi as he lowered his head... and then turned to stare at... me?

"You two useless idiots are going to eat after we're all done." She says as she folds her arms and looks at Takashi again.

It took me a couple of seconds to realize who these... 'two' were...

"Uhh... i'm staying in the corner because?" I tilt my head.

"Sleeping on a rock doesn't count as hunting" She says as she turns to me and narrows her eyes.

"I provided the tools and location, also... you were spying on me?" I say as i also fold my arms.

"I..i wasn't spying!... i... just had to make sure you weren't..."

"I already agreed with Naier to share half my catch, so half of what i'm holding is actually 'his'." Kohta cuts hers off.

"Hey! I wasn't finished talking fatso!" She shouts as she snaps her head to him... yet, he stayed as giddy as ever.

"My, look who turned out to be quite the shrewd businessman" Shizuka puts her finger over her mouth and tilts her head as she giggles.

"Indeed, half the catch and you didn't even get wet. Rather impressive." Saeko adds right after in a casual tone.

(... Why every time Saeko says the word 'wet', i'm getting the wrong kind of flashbacks?...)

"Well, no point wasting time about it, let's get the fish ready!" Rei jumps off her seat and walks up to Kohta.

"We'll clean the fish, you can wait outside, the sink inside still works, shame it has nothing inside to cook them with though. So, you can wait outside by the campfire." Rei takes the net as she speaks.

And after the girls disappeared into the shack...

"Thanks for the lure" Kohta throws me the remaining jerky. I grab it and leave it on a table next to me.

"If they see it now... ehh whatever, still got the fish because of it" I shrug as i look at the pack... there was still plenty left inside... though i don't know how it would taste after getting submerged in saltwater.

(Still, i wonder where this place gets its water from... too far to be connected to the mainland... and this place has no other buildings... sea water?... Or the island has a natural underground lake or something?... hmm... well, we haven't tried drinking the water from the shack's tap... just to be safe... as nobody can figure out if it's drinkable or not)

"Ughh... maybe i should've joined you guys..." Takashi says as he lifts his head.

"You were really getting chewed on... good thing we came when we did" Kohta responds... Takashi lets out an awkward laugh, gets up, comes over to me and extends his arm, the walkie talky in his hand.

"Let me guess... nothing but static and clicks after a short distance?" I say as i take the radio and put it in my bag. Takashi just nodded.

And so, while the girls were dealing with the fish, we went outside. Before following the others i also grabbed a small towel and left my backpack on a chair.

(Now that i think of it, i would like to avoid tossing the balaclava in saltwater... so i'll use a towel instead.)

After some time passed, the girls also started to come out, with a couple of fish already skewered on sticks.

"We'll have to figure out a way to preserve the rest... we really need to find a way to make ice somehow." Saya starts talking as she walks up to us and sits on one of the rocks that surrounded the unlit campfire... i don't have to mention that her seat wasn't anywhere near mine do i?

"A working ice machine would function here, as long as the generator keeps running" I answer as the rest of the girls also started to sit around the campfire.

"Well... go find one then" Saya responds with a grin.

"Sure... that would mean i have to go back in town though, so, do i take somebody with me... or i go by my self and get yelled at after i return?" I chuckle as i speak and turn to look at the boat.

"I could come with you, to save you from the yelling part" Saeko, who was sitting next to me, responds with a smile... causing Saya to turn to her as she puffed her cheeks and narrowed her eyes.

"Uhh... how are we going to light up the fire?" Rei asks as she looks at the campfire.

"Oh, i know a couple of ways! We can..."

Before Kohta could even finish speaking, i pulled the lighter that Saya's dad gave me and flipped it open

(Funny thing is... i actually forgot about the lighter when thinking of the stuff i needed to take with me... good thing i always have it on me)

"Or, we can use this" I cut him off as i turn on the lighter.

"Or... we can use this..." Kohta looked kind of... dejected as he responded... guess... i just stole his thunder.

"Huh, so aren't totally useless after all." Saya raises an eyebrow as she looks at me with a slight smirk.

(... ok, now you're asking for it now princess...)

"Yea, i don't remember where i found it though, i just remember having it one morning, after i woke up... i think... i might have... moved in my sleep..." I answer casually...

Saya's eyes go wide as her face turns red... she opens her mouth... but says nothing. She just... turned to look at the campfire.

"J... just shut up and light up the fire already idiot" She says she keeps looking at the campfire, her arms folded to the point that you'd think she was actually hugging her self.

I nodded, took a silent deep breath, lit up the fire... and held my breath.

(Too mean?... uhh... nahh, things like picking on her about how i carried her to her mom is what would be mean...)

"Good thing we didn't capsize... Rika would be really mad if we ruined her guns... umm... are you going to eat with the mask on?" Shizuka asks as she tilts her head, jumping from subject to another like it's going out of style.

(Perfect, thank you Shizuka)

"Right, i'm going to the shack for a sec... don't want to leave it on the sand" I say as i get up and walk towards the Shack.

I go up the steps, grab my bag and go inside the main room, then close the door behind me... and take a deep breath. I then look around and grab another small towel before going to the sink in the kitchen.

"Better not touch the sink with the towel... lest i want to smell fish for the rest of the night... even if the sink looks 'clean'..." I nod to myself put the towel under the faucet and open it.

"Ok... i will wait here for a bit... then move out... i could also take Saeko's sword with me... or... not... last thing i want, is to ruin it." I turn to look at the shotgun that i still had on me... let me tell you, these three-way slings... real godsend.

"You will do as fine i suppose" I then went back to the main room and next to the door that led outside, where Kohta had left the dynamite box, i opened it and started filling my bag.

"Don't know how many i'll need... but, better safe than sorry" After the bag was full i get up and put my hand on the handle, yet before i could even open it, I hear Shizuka shout about the leaf's properties... and Takashi shouting shortly after for everybody to run... i nod to my self and open the door slightly...

First thing i saw?... Kohta in a white bandana... screaming something about Vietnam?...

"Alright..." I close the door, take off my headgear and put the balaclava in my bag. Then i press the towel against my mouth and wear the mask again...

"Ughh i can feel it dripping on my neck... this shit better be worth it" I wipe my neck with my hand... and turn to the door.

"Alright, no pressure, just get out, turn right, jump over the Shack's railing and then go right again, then follow that path... Takashi managed to get to that fucking cave while sleepwalking... so it can't be that far... ok... let's go" And the moment i opened the door.

"VICTORYYYYY, FREEEEDOOOM!" Kohta screams as he keeps running around on the beach... behind him.

"Stop! Resisting arrest is against the law! Stop!" Asami, chasing after him with a... stick...

Shizuka was on top of Takashi along with Rei doing... stuff... i... couldn't see Saya or Saeko anywhere though... bad, because i have no idea where they went... good, because they were not on top of Takashi... i would probably get triggered really bad if i saw them going after him now... and i guess... Alice went for water as per in the anime?

I nod to my self and start running to my right, glancing at Saeko's sword as i run towards the railing.

"Yea, better if i don't..." I jump over the railing and turn right while i was still in the air... and the moment i touched the i ground...

"Ehehe... gotcha~" Something violently pushing me forward and to the left... thankfully, i was able to keep my self from falling... but now... i had somebody clinging on my back...

(... Well... that went south fast... WAY too fast)

"Uhh... Whatever it was... i didn't d..." Before i could finish, a hand lands on my shoulder and spins me around... and i end up face to face with Saya... or you know... face to shoulder... being it that Saya is well... a bit short...

She grabs my shirt's collar with both hands and tries to pull me to her hight... i grab her hands and start walking backward... while she kept moving forward.

(At least... she didn't wander off...)

"And... where do you think you're going?" She asks with a sly smile.

"Ohh... you know... around..." I say as i keep walking backward, slowly trying to pry her hands off me.

(Why is her grip this fucking strong?!)

"It's... not fair..." She lowers her head...

"Takashi... kept ignoring me all these years... yet the moment his stupid girlfriend comes back to him, even after she dumped him for his 'best friend'. He instantly runs after her like a stupid dog! And now, even Kohta is acting all lovely dovely with Asami in front of me to rub it in!

And you... why is Saeko staring at you all of the time now?!... You... you said that you find Saeko interesting... but... you also said that you find me interesting... you said that in the estate... and yet... i'm the only one being left in the corner again..." She keeps her head lowered as her grip on me tightens...

"Why... why do i have to be the only one that's left out again! Why can't you pay more attention to me!" And... she starts shaking me as she lifts her head.

"Saya... you're... being affected by whatever this smoke is and uhh... yea... you need to go somewhere safe... and go to uhh... go to sleep? Please?" I say as i put my hands on her shoulders and try to keep her off me... and... i'm having the weirdest mixed feelings right now...

To my surprise... she stops trying to latch her self on me... and lowers her head again... yet, she doesn't let go of me.

"Ughh... I... do feel rather light-headed, so i maybe you're right... the smoke... must be affecting me..." She shakes her head... before lifting it to look at me again... with a... grin?

"So... it'll be fine... no matter what i do now... is fine... right?" She narrows her eyes and smiles seductively as she 'asks'.

"Uhh... i don't think that's how it wo..."

Before i could even finish speaking, she had taken her hands off my collar... and grabbed my mask... which she then yanked off without too much trouble... at least... with her hands on my mask... i was now free... though i lost the towel... along with the mask.

"Finally... i can finally see your face again... why do you keep wearing this stupid thing anyway..." She says with a smile as she casually tosses the mask behind her.

(I... really... REALLY want to sit down and explain to her how awesome my mask is... but... Shit, got to go, right now.)

I turn around... and... i didn't even manage to take two steps... before... I came face to face with Saeko, who came running from behind the Shack... three to four meters away from me...

(Really now?!)

"Naier! Thank God i found you! Come on! We have to get out of here, quickly!" She extends her arm to me. I just... stared at her hand...

(... If... if i take her hand and go with her... then... ughh, fuck, no, focus...)

"Hey! i got to him first, don't butt in!" I hear Saya shout behind me.

"It..it's the smoke, come on Naier... we have to move... Now!" Saeko starts leaning towards me. Her eyes looking at me almost as if she was... begging...

"The smoke is affecting you too Saeko, we... must not go deeper into the woods, we don't know what might be in there, both of you should go back inside the shack and rest" I respond.

(Why... am i even trying to reason with them?...)

"... Y... yes you're right... going... out there is dangerous in our current state... let's... go back inside the shack..." Much to my surprise, Saeko lowers her hand and calmly nods.

Yet... before i could react, i saw her eyes go wide... and then... she charged straight at me.

(The fuck?!)

I jump to the side and turn around to look behind me... only to see Saya as she ran past me... and straight towards Saeko...

"Wha?!..."

That... was all they managed to say as they end up crashing into each other, with Saeko pushing Saya back a couple of meters, going well past the Shack and into the beach before falling on the ground... with Saeko on top of Saya...

I run towards them, only to hear... uhh... moan..ing?... Shortly after, i also notice that they were... hugging each other...

(... I just realized... Saeko's body is actually visibly more toned compared to Say... Arrghh! Fuck! Focus! No! Don't fuck! Just focus!)

Saeko, with her eyes still closed, then brings her lips close to Saya's ear and whispers something... then lowers her head and nuzzles against her neck.

"S... stahh..." Saya, despite her...'protest'... wraps her hands around Saeko's head and... uhh...

(Ok... get the fuck out of here... right now... before my eyes fall out... or i lose what little self-control i got left)

I turn around... only to see my mask... on the ground... and i quickly put my hands to my face.

"Shit!, forgot that Saya pulled off my mask!" i quickly grab it and wear it...

"Uhh... did i breath it?... ohh who the fuck am i kidding... of coursed i breathed it! I always breath!" I shake my head with a groan and start heading towards the cave... yet... i didn't get too far, as i started feeling sluggish a couple of steps later... and ended up on one knee not long after.

"Shit... the wind blowing from the sea towards me? Oh... of course it fucking is... Still, i need to do this before i pass out... corpses could have heard all this... they might be moving in the cave as i speak" I

shake my head and get up. Yet... i fell to the ground again... two steps later... As i looked up this time though... I saw... a blurry figure?

"Do you want power?"

"What?"

"Do you want power?"

"Uhhh, i want to stay awake... does that count as power?"

"yes or no"

"Wait for real?"

"YES OR NO"

"Fuck, yes, fine, yes, i need to stay awake"

"Your desires shall be granted"

"My desires actually just fell sleep after bumping into each other... and they are now uhh..."

"Will you shut up for a second please, i'm trying to concentrate here"

"Uhh... Ok... sorry"

(Dick)

"Call me dick again and i will kill you off before the end of this chapter"

"What?!" And Naier, suddenly felt a new power coursing through him, he gets up and looks around.

"Ok... this... was weird, this smoke... is way weirder than i imagined... did i fall asleep?... i don't feel sluggish any more..." He says as he ponders what just happened.

"Uhh... wait... something... is definitely... weird" Naier tries to think as...

"Wait... who the fuck are you?!" Naier sh...

"Don't avoid my question! And why do you keep saying my name!"... Well... shit... it's going to be one of those...

"What? One of what?... That's it, I've gone nuts... i'm hearing voices in my head!"

Oh by the way, you all must have realized how this is going to go now, If don't like this type of thing... skip to the end, to the next set of bold letters... actually you can just skip this chapter altogether... though... you will miss out the poll and whatever story is in here.

"And who in hell are you talking to now?!" Nobody, don't mind me.

"I... must have fallen asleep... shit... uhhh... how the hell do i wake my self up? " Naier pinches him self... yet to his surprise, he felt pain.

"Please don't tell me that you are going to do this every time i do something..." Naier groans in displeasure as he...

"Ok, ok, i get it... now please... be quiet for... one second... i need to think" Naier sh..

"ONE. SECOND."...

"Ok... ok... i felt pain... weird considering this is a dream" Naier then presses his hands together.

"... If you know that they are supposed to pass through... then it is possible that they won't... right?"... You're... not dreaming.

"Bullshit, if i'm not dreaming... then i'm hallucinating" Maybe... but you're not asleep... so try to avoid killing anybody from your group if you want to test it out.

"... Can i kill you instead?" Nope and trust me, you don't want me dead.

"Why?" Because i'm here to help.

"Huh... help eh? You know, this is weird enough as it is... how are you going to help me... voice in my head?" By making sure you survive this night.

"... You know what... i don't care, i'll bite... the main point is still the same, i need to blast that fucking cave" Naier shakes his head and turns to look at the path that led to the cave.

"... The sooner i finish this, the sooner it will end... before i go insane" Naier then starts w..Ahhhhh! Wait wait wait!

"Huh, what now?" You can't go there... yet... this path does lead to the cave... but you can't go there yet.

"... Because?" Because... You... need to go in the opposite direction... to the right of the shack... towards the big forested area.

"... Because?" Because the cave ain't a place you want to waltz in like this.

"... The longer i take, the bigger the chance of corpses coming here, and the rest of the group is... uhh..." Naier looks at the other members of the group as they were... uhh...

"... Can you not copy me?"... Sorry... it's just... i can't say that crap out loud...

"Why? Takashi is just groping..." STAAAP! Forest! Forest first!... The group will be fine, trust me.

"... A voice in my head is telling me to trust it with the lives of my group... you nuts?... i'm nuts..." Well, you can go to the cave then, but you WILL end up backtracking, i'm trying to save you time here...

"Yea, that sounds like a perfect plan" Naier turns around, and foolishly continues towards the cave, shotgun in hand, dynamites in bag... you didn't forget to take ammo right? or the lighter? Not that you will need it right now.

"Yes Dad, i didn't forget anything"... i detect sarcasm.

"I detect a sarcastic voice in my head" Touche.

By the time Naier got near the cave... it was already dark, as he insisted on ignoring the directions of the handsome voi...

"The fucking hell that you sound handsome, you sound more like a squeaking rubber duck... i do admit that i took a wrong turn though..." Four...

"What?" You took four wrong turns... all of em being turns that you took after ignoring my directions... anyway... the cave should be here.

"Yea looks li... uhh... the fuck is this?" And Naier stops in his tracks the moment he sees the cave... or well... what was in front of it... that being corpses... a lot of them... like... twenty? thirty?...

"Why there's a corpse party here?... That's... not how it's supposed to go..." Corpse party?... I don't see any vengeful spirits or old schools anywhere... uhh anyway... i warned you... forest first... cave second... or you are going to try to deal all of them now?... let me warn you... dynamite will attract even more of them from the cave... so i advise against it. Same deal with the shotgun...

"... Uhh... fine... forest first..." Ohhh, you're going to listen to me now?

"So far, everything you said turned out to be true, both the turns i needed to take and the fact that i would not be able to pass..." At least you now realize it... so... have fun backtracking...

Ohh hey look! There is a small sign next to the cave...
uhh...'Underwater pass - this cave is connected to the mainland, under construction, please wear a hard hat before entering'...

"..." And so Naier, starts running back towards the Shack, totally ignoring my totally amazing find.

And once he returned... he..

"... They're... still going at it..."He IGNORED... Saya and Saeko as they... uhh... yea, Naier just kept moving... He kept his face straight and ran past the shack before turning left. He then went straight... and seconds later, he saw Kohta, who had his face on the sand, his hands behind his back and Asami on top of him.

"Aaaahh, Asami can't find her handcuffs! where are her handcuffs! Y... you stole them! Didn't you?!" She shouts at Kohta.

"We will prevail! We will prevail! Freeeeddooom!" Kohta kept shouting under her. Either... Asami knows how to hold down a dude twist her size... or Kohta just doesn't care.

Takashi was... uh... elsewhere... not around here...

"What? Takashi is over there with Shizuka and Rei... and he's..."
HE. DID. NOT. SEE... Instead, he ran past the Shack, and kept going straight, the forest to his right. Now.

"... uhh... So... i need to keep going straight?" Yes, the target destination is further away, going into the forest now will just slow you down.

"I see..." And so, he kept going straight...

And... Several minutes later...

"Ughh... Out of all the things i could 'see'... why am i getting... this?" Naier ponders as he keeps running down the beach.

"Hey! It's you that i'm asking!" Naier screams at nobody.

"... for-fucking-get it" Naier pouts like a little princess as he keeps running.

"What?! i did not p... Gahh, i'm starting to sound like Saya now"... Naier sighs and keeps running in pure defeat.

"This better... be a one-time thing..." Yea i hope so too... this shit is exhausting.

And so, Naier soon reached the entrance to the forest. Entrance as in a slight opening between the trees, no real roads, path or what so ever... but... he could make out tire tracks that led deeper... a lot of them... so i guess that could be considered as a path.

"Why do i need to come here again?" He asks himself.

"No, it's you i'm asking, not my self" Naier went inside to find his answers.

"... Oh for fuck's sake" And he walked into the forest.

Said forest was eerie enough as it is, being it night, didn't really help, at least there were no corpses to be seen...

"So... what am i looking for?" Naier kept walking straight as he spoke... and kept walking straight even after he finished speaking following the 'path' created by the car tracks.

"... You know if you are going to help, then just tell me 'go straight'..." Naier felt like talking to himself again for some reason.

"... why did i even bother?"

A couple of minutes later, and after seeing only trees and bushes for a while, was the first change... among some trees in the distance, next to a couple of giant boulders... a large open cage, big enough to fit two or three big horses next to each other. It had a thick metal plate for a floor and another same plate as a ceiling, the 'walls' of the cage consisted of metal bars.

"Uhh... please don't tell that's the reason i'm here..." Of course not.

"Huh. So now you awn..." You're here for what was inside the cage.

"... And i should have figured that the only reason you answered... was to fuck up my night even more..." Naier stared at the cage for a couple of seconds.

"So... i... just walk around?" Naier left the cage, but he kept walking while keeping an eye on the car tracks, so he wouldn't end up getting lost in the forest.

"... Ohh... right... uhh... it's the smoke... otherwise... yea..."... Naier thanked the handsome voice in his head...

"Don't push your luck." ehh... worth a try...

And so, Naier kept following the tire tracks.

"Corpses better not be anywhere near the group..." Don't worry Saya and Saeko are fine.

"I said group" And i know that these two are the only ones you really care for.

"Hey, I might be more worried about these two, but that doesn't mean that i don't care about the rest... i mean... come on i don't want to let Shizuka or Alice get killed. Or Kohta and Asami, when they finally just got together... plus the trouble i went through to save

her ass... and uhh... Takashi and Rei... after they... got together... again" After Takashi bashed his 'best friend's' skull in with a bat.

"Uhh... shit's complicated" I know that it's really not... but... let's say that it is... Ohh, by the way. we're here.

Naier then stopped in his tracks as he noticed... something... sleeping... straight ahead of him...

"... It's a... gaint ass wolf" Yep.

"This thing was in the cage wasn't it?" Yep.

"It's lying down... Yet i think it can still reach to about my waist..."
Yep.

"Please don't tell me this is what i need to find" Yep, it is.

"It can probably kill me with one bite" Yep.

"And you want me to fight it?" Yep.

"Ok... giant or not... a shotgun should still" No guns.

"... What?" No guns, no swords, no other pointy and, or deadly objects.

"... You for real?" Yep

"Why?" Well... how the hell are you going to tame it if it's dead.

"... uhh... you want me to do what with the how now?" Tame it obviously.

"... I'm leaving" As Naier turns around, the wolf wakes up, notices him... and growls.

"... You... didn't just..." Naier turns around to see the big gray wolf staring at him, now that i was up... its head reach to about the hight

of his neck.

"... How the f..." Before Naier could think of stuff that he need not think the wolf changed at him!

"Hey what the hell?!" Ohh don't a sourpuss, this will be fun!

"Fun!? You're fucking nuts !" As Naier keeps whining, the wolf leaps at him. Yet... The moment it got near, He grabs it by the lower jaw, turns around and tosses the wolf forward. The wolf spins around in the air and lands on its feet, sliding a few meters as it stared at Naier with an angry expression.

"... Did i... just do that?" Naier blinks a couple of times before looking at his hands... See, fun.

"Ok, this is weOAA!" Before he could finish, the wolf was charging at him again, this time trying to bite down on his leg. Seeing the wolf's lowered head, Naier steps on it and jumps forward, turning to look at the wolf while he was in the air.

"Ok... i know i got some parkour skills... but shit is insane, how am i doing this?!"... Naier then remembered what he always said... don't question a good thing...

"Touche... so... i'm fist-fighting a giant wolf... seems legit..." And fistfight... he did, as the moment the wolf charged again, he slid his left leg back along with his left hand, while extending his right hand forward. He narrowed his eyes... and the moment the wolf got near he brought his left hand down, flat on the wolf's face, before using his right Knee too kick the wolf back and quickly jump back. The wolf whines for a second before sneezing and turning to look at him again.

"I'm normally against animal violence!" Then get this thing done already, the poor thing can feel pain you know.

"And on whose fucking side are you!?" The side that gives free cookies obviously...

The wolf charges, and realizing that trying to 'wrestle' the beast would be suicidal even now, he focuses on evading it. He sidesteps as the wolf jumps past him, and takes a few steps back. The wolf then turns around and charges at him again.

The next couple of minutes went on with Naier evading the wolf as it kept charging at him, each time faster and with more aggression...

"This shit getting out of hand..." As the wolf charged at him again, Naier, instead of sidestepping, crouches down. Once the wolf got in arms reach, he puts his left hand to the ground behind his back, and with his right hand, he grabs the side of the wolf's head then turns his upper body around and yanks the wolf towards the direction it was already charging at.

The wolf, being unable to stop after getting the extra momentum... and you know... being in the air and not having air brakes. Ends up crashing into a tree that was behind Naier... and with a whine... it stops moving.

"Uhhh... I didn't kill it!... The tree did!" Naier quickly gets up and runs up the wolf, only to see that it was unconscious.

"Ahh... it passed out?"... It passed out...

"I just fought a giant wolf with my bare hands... and won?..." Naier tilted his head as he looked at the downed wolf.

"Ok... that... just happened... probably. Maybe it's all a hallucination and i was actually fighting against air... that... would look really weird from a third party perspective..." Naier takes a deep breath and drops his hands to his knees.

"Ok... now what?" Now you... feed it.

"Uhh... excuse me?" While it's down, you feed it. Until it understands that you're a friend.

"... Are you retarded?" Feeeed iiiit... but yea... got the beef jerky?

"Uhh... yea" Naier takes off his bag, opens it and starts looking inside...

"Uhh... no..." He responds shortly after...

Ok... **FLASHBACK TIME!**

"Wha!?"

"Thanks for the lure" Kohta throws me the remaining jerky. I grab it and leave it on a table next to me.

End of **FLASHBACK TIME!**

"... Did you have to act this dramatic?" Yesss.

"Why are you suddenly so hyper?" I always wanted to have a giant pet wolf.

"Uhh... Ok back to the shack... hope the wolf won't wake up until i'm back" Ohh don't worry, its torpor is still very high.

"It's what is very what?" Uhh... nothing... just go to the shack.

Naier shakes his head, gives the wolf one last glance and starts running towards the Shack, using the tire tracks to exit the forest. After that, he then followed the same path he took on the beach until he reached the Shack. Once there he jumped up the steps and went to the table that had the meat jerky.

"Hope you don't mind, I'm permanently borrowing this." Naier snatches the food and turns around. As he runs down the steps he turns to look at his group as they were... uhhh... as they were... AAAA... I CAN'T FUCKING READ THIS!...

Uhh... as they were... showing their affection... for each other...
Don't worry, they were all still... dressed.

"Except for Rei and Takashi..." THAT'S IT, IM WAKING UP THE WOLF.

"What! NO NONONONO WAIT! I meant... they were... ahhh...
patting?... Each other... on the head... vigorously... Takashi
mostly..." He turns his head as he speaks... and ends up seeing
Saya and Saeko...

"Can i... leave now?... this is... uhh... making it insanely... hard...
for me... to concentrate" You can leave...

"Thank you..." Yet, he did not move...

... I said... you can leave... Naier.

"..."

Suddenly, Saeko and Saya felt a huge urge to fall in love with
Takashi an... Naier then turned around and left with a quick pace...

... Still... i didn't know Saya can be this... aggressive... i mean
Saeko..sure, but Sa...

"... Let's focus on the wolf ahh?" Naier nods to himself and starts
running towards the spot where the wolf had been knocked out...

"The wolf... better still be out cold" Don't worry, it is.

And, after running back to the forest's entrance and following the tire
tracks again, Naier ended up on the spot with the downed wolf.

See, the wolf is still here.

"... Ok... now what?"... you feed it.

"... You're... not kidding... are you?" Nope, you can actually tame dinosaurs like that too. Just go next to it and feed it... oh and it might take some time so...

"You can tame wha..."

TIME SKIP!

... An hour later... Naier, was standing in front at the now awake wolf.

"... This... is so fucking weird..." Naier keeps staring at the wolf at it tilts its head at him... Hey, hey give it a command!

"... Uhh... a command? How it's supposed to even..." Just give it!

"... Sit." The wolf jerks its head and instantly sits down... Naier blinks a couple of times before.

"... Roll..." The wolf lets out a loud bark, drops to the floor and rolls...

"... Explain to me... how the fuck this whole thing even works..." The wolf stops rolling around, gets to a sitting position... and starts barking... in different volume and speed with every bark.

"It's actually trying to explain it ?!" Naier leans his body back as he stares at the wolf.

"Ok... you know what... i don't care... friendly giant wolf is better than hostile giant wolf" The wolf barks affirmatively.

"And how the hell did you know it was an afferm... uhh... fuck it... never mind... i don't care... not the weirdest thing that happened to me today" Naier turns around and leav..HEY!

"Huh, what, i got the wolf. So that means i can go to the cave now, right?" Uhh... yea... but... ain't you gonna name it... err her... also...

how to say this without making it sound weird... you can ride this wolf... like a horse, no saddle needed...

"... I can do what now?..Uhh... i don't know if it's good or bad... but for some reason, i'm not even surprised anymore... but yea... name... i do have to name... ehh... her, right?..." Yea, her, so don't name her Jacobs, please.

"Uhh... ok... hmm" Naier thinks for a bit... and.

"Ahh, i got it. Wolf!" The wolf tilts its head and focuses on Naier.

"Your name from now on will be..." As Naier spoke... his nose started itching...

"Ughh, F..." Naier puts his hand to his face to stop himself from sneezing... but you know... mask...

"FACHOOO!" And the wolf then howls to the sky acknowledging her new name! Her new title!

"WHAT?! NO, I SNEASED, YOUR NAME IS NOT FACHOO" The wolf, upon hearing the name Fachoo howls again.

"FFFFFFFFFFFFFFUUUUUUUUUUUCKKK!" In a fit of rage, Naier kicks a rock... Fachoo barks excitedly as she runs after the rock.

"STOP... calling her... that"...

Naier takes a few deep breaths to calm himself down... whipping his tears away, as the wolf comes back to him.

"First, i didn't tear up. Second, I'm wearing a mask smartass, how the hell am i supposed to wipe my tears away?"...

Fachoo~

"AWOOO!"

"FUCK YOU!"

"... Uhh... focus... the cave... i need to blast that fucking cave... and this nightmare will... hopefully end"

And so, burning with a newfound passion... that i have totally no idea where he got from by the way... Naier mounts Fach...

"..."

His wolf... Naier mounts his wolf...

"Can this night... get any weirder..."... Uhh... maybe?...

"... Oh boy..." Naier then rides the wolf back to the shack.

With his new friend, Naier managed to reach his destination in a fraction of the time, and once there.

"Ok... i should take the path next to the Shack, it leads to the..."
Wait...

"... What... am i going to tame a dragon by stealing its eggs now?"
Uhh... sounds fun... but no... go to the Shack and take Saeko's sword with you.

"Dude... or whatever you are... i'm NOT taking her sword... if i end up ruining it she w..." Don't worry. You won't, trust me.

"... Uhh... i must be going mental..." Naier gets off the wolf and runs to the Shack, he climbs the railing and grabs the Katana from the chair it was on, then jumps off the railing and runs back to the wolf.

"Ok... last check" Naier takes off the bag, opens it and...

"A... ahh!... T... there!" A female voice...'shouts'... Naier turns his head towards the sound to see Saya and Sae... Focus!

"Right..." Ignoring the... voices... Naier turns to the bag.

"Dynamite, check... shotgun, check... bullets, check... lighter, check... Sword... check... moaning that is permanently getting recorded into fucking my brain... fuckin triple check.."Naier closes the back, throws it over his shoulder and gets back on the wolf...

"Let's go... now... please..." The wolf barks affirmatively and starts running down the path that led to the cave.

"So... animals are immune to this after all?" Uhh... don't know... guess we will find out now.

"... Are you for fucking real?!" Naier shakes his head as he asks himself.

"Ohh, now you ignore me"

And a couple of minutes later... they were by the cave... the corpses... still there.

"So... now what?...i let the wolf charge in or something?"... You'd let the poor thing charge in all alone? show some compassion! The wolf whines at me as the voice in my head keeps speaking.

"... So i..." CHAAAAAARGE!

"Wait whaaaaAAAA!" And the wolf charges forward, Naier grabs on to her to keep himself from falling.

"AAA You know what! FUCK IT!" He draws the Katana and lets go of the scabbard.

The moment the wolf gets near the corpse group, she jumps. While in the air Naier lets go of the wolf and puts the sword over his shoulder, and right before touching the ground, he swings horizontally towards the nearest corpse, taking its head off with a clean cut.

The moment he touched the ground he grabs the now decapitated corpse and tosses it to the left on a couple of other corpses, he then

leans towards the right as he follows up with a stab, passing the blade right through a corpse's head that was to his right. With the tip of the sword still inside the head, he turns around grabs the sword with both hands, bringing the sword over his head.

He then follows up with a strong vertical slash as he takes a step forward, blood flying in an arc as the sword went from the corpse head that was behind him, to the corpse head that was in front of him. He glances to his left and then twists the sword to the left before lowering his posture, slamming his right shoulder into the corpse that still had the blade in its head, sending the twitching body tumbling backward. With his left-hand folded he then passes the sword over his head and grabs it with both hands.

He then takes a large step forward as he brings the sword down in a sideways slash, cutting the last nearby corpse in two. All the way from its right shoulder, to its left lower side, and once the corpse's upper torso fell to the ground, he tosses the sword slightly on the air, reverse grabs the hilt and lands the blade on the back of the corpse's head before pulling the blade back out, tossing it in the air again and grabbing it normally.

He then takes a deep breath and looks at the dead corpses around him...

"Holy shit... did i just... do all this?" As he ponders, a corpse charged at him from behind.

He sidesteps and grabs it by the arm, then with a quick motion, he kicks it on the back of its knee while still holding on to its arm, as the corpse falls to its knees he cleaves both its head and arm off.

He then turns around and walks to the nearest lone corpse, he shoves the 'extra' arm in the corpse's mouth before grabbing by the neck, and as he turns around, he throws it towards the declining corpse group.

"... I... don't remember being... THIS good..." Wish Saeko was here to see you?... I do wonder... how would she react if she saw you...

And so, while Naier was busy dealing with the corpses on his side and wonder whether Saeko would get all hot and bothered by his actions...

"Hey! It was you who wondered that, not me!" Fachoo was tearing everything a new one, hands and legs flying left and right, whatever corpse managed to get a hold of her, got shaken off by the constant jumping and running, or, it ended up getting bitten in the neck first...

"Ignoring me huh... and her name is not Fachoo..." Naier whines in a low tone, yet the moment he uttered the name, the wolf turns towards him, barks and runs up to him, all covered in blood... from head to toe... wonder if i should change her race from 'gray wolf', to 'red wolf'.

"Uhh... does it matters... but i do admit... you were right... having her here made this... way easier" Naier pats the wolf on the head as he looks at the remaining corpses that were shambling towards them... then at the corpses that were stuck under the bodies that he tossed around...

"Well... let's finish this huh?" Fachoo barks loudly before running a circle around him and back into the fray.

"You're... going to keep calling her that... aren't you?" Naier asks something obvious as he casually walks up to a corpse that was reaching out for him while it was still stuck under and unmoving body... and stabs it on the head...

"... Figures" He then looks around until he spots the sword's scabbard. He then runs up to it and picks it up.

"Uhh... better if a certain somebody doesn't learn that i just tossed this to the ground" He says as he dusts off the scabbard with his hand before sheathing the sword.

He turns around to see that the corpse group had all but disappeared... With Fachoo sitting in the center while wagging her tail.

"... How... did i even survive fighting that wolf?" He tilts his head as he looks at the bloody mess.

"Uhh... no matter... cave..." Naier takes a deep breath and walks towards the cave, with Fachoo following behind him.

"Alright... You ready?" He says as he turns towards the bloody wolf... which replies with an excited bark, as energetic as ever.

And so, with a nod, Naier charges forward. Deeper into the dark cave, dete...

"Hey did anybody bring a torch? i forgot mine!"

God damn it Naier, i'm trying to narrate here!

"Sorry!.."

... And so, Naier charges forward. Deeper into the dark cave, dete...

"Never mind, i found a flashlight!"

GOD DAMN IT!

"Ohh... and by the way!... The dynamite... how can i blow up the cave without burying my self under the rubble?"... You're the hero... figure it out...

"Oh, come on! just help me out for once!"

You mean twice... Ughh... you'll find some gasoline canisters in there... you have the lighter... use the gasoline to make a line after dousing the dynamites... after you go far enough, light up the fuel line with the lighter.

"Thanks" You're welcome, Now try not to die off-screen.

"Hardass till the end huh..." What was that? All the girls in the team like Takashi now?

"... I said nothing..." Thought so...

Ohh by the way, bolt text here, craziness stops... somewhat...

...

Several hours later

Saya slowly opens her eyes, a smile on her face as she kept hugging the person that was resting on top of her.

She moves her hands to her head and rubs her eyes before touching around her face, trying to find her glasses, which she found resting on her forehead. She lowers them until they were on her eyes and then turns to look at the sleeping person that was on top of her... and... blinks... several times.

"Uhh... wait... S... Saeko?... why... why are you on top of me?... Hey." She shakes the sleeping girl with a confused expression.

"Hmm... Naier..." Saeko responds by tightening her grip around Saya's waist, snuggling up to her.

Saya's expression... then instantly turns into a frown... her eyebrows becoming... somewhat of a straight line as she narrows her eyes... She slowly brings her fingers around Saeko's sides... and pokes... hard.

"YIAAA!" Saeko yelps as she squirms. She then springs off Saya and ends up sitting with her hands behind her back.

"W... what happened..." Still half asleep she stares at Saya who got up and fixed her swimsuit.

"You... wouldn't let go of me..." She responds.

Saeko blinks a couple of times.

"Of... you?" She falls in though for a couple of seconds as she keeps staring at Saya... and then her eyes go wide as her face goes red.

"Yes... me... why?... Who did you think you were hugging?" Saya raises an eyebrow as she stares with a sly grin... her face... still flushed none the less.

"N... nobody... we... we need to make sure the others are alright..." Saeko responds as she starts getting up.

Yet before she could even get up...

"REVOLUTIOOOOOOON" Kohta jumps out of Shack and starts running... waving a broom around like a flag.

"Stop! You can't escape! The more you resist, the longer your sentence will be! Stop right there!" Asami also jumps out of the Shack shortly after, waving a stick in the air as she chases after Kohta...

"Are they... awake?... Their eyes were open..." Saeko asks as she gets up and stares at the unfolding event.

"Uhh... They better not... be awake..." Saya responds with her mouth half-open.

"Hmm... wait... is that?" Saeko walks towards the hut, next to the railing, on the sand, her sheathed sword. She picks it up and partially draws out the blade.

"Why... is my sword here... i'm pretty sure i left it on one of the seats..." She asks as she looks around.

"No idea, maybe Kohta or Asami took it during their... uhh... adventure" Saya responds as she keeps staring at the two while

they kept running around.

"We... should probably wake them up" Saeko says as she walks up to Saya, her sword in her hand, Saya turns to look at her and nods.

Yet, before they could even get to them, they notice that Shizuka and Rei laid flat on the sand... both with a... uhh...'happy' expression... and as they got close.

"... Rikkaaa... what's taking you so long... come back here alreadyyy..."

"Takashiii... where did you go... Takashiii..."

Both Shizuka and Rei were talking in their sleep...

"Let's... wake them up..." Saya speaks up in a monotone voice as she stared at them.

"Y... yes..." Saeko responds.

After some time of shaking, both of them open their eyes, a smile still plastered on their faces.

"Huh... Takashi?... Where is Takashi..." Rei started asking the moment she opened her eyes. Shizuka just got up to a sitting position without speaking, she stretched with a yawn and just stared 'forward' with a sleepy expression...

"Takashi... was not here when we found you" Saeko responds.

"What... but... i..."

"REVOLUTTIOOOON!" Before she could even finish, Kohta crashes into the group like a cannonball, knocking Saya down under him.

Several screams, slaps and idiot nominations later... the group was sitting by the sea... all of them hugging their knees as they stared at the ocean.

"Hallucinations... it was nothing... but hallucinations..." Saya says with a deadpan voice.

"... Yes... none of it was real... everything was an unfortunate accident" Saeko answers with the same deadpan voice.

"But we were still moving around... what we did... was probably real" Kohta responds.

"Shut up Fatso... i don't want to hear any of it" Saya answers without raising her voice.

"We still need to find Takashi..." Rei speaks up after her.

"And Naier..." Saeko says right after.

"And Alice..." Asami adds up.

And... speaking of the devil.

"H..help! Takashi! Takashi is in trouble!" Alice comes up running to them with a couple of bottles in her arms.

The group turns to her before looking at each other... and they all nod before getting up. They then follow Alice to the cave's entrance... and stop dead in their tracks...

"What... the..." Saya was the first one to speak as she looked at the corpse group that was in front of the cave... or... well... what remained of it...

"Eheehe... girls... stop it... we mustn't..."

Their sight then gets drawn to a voice... which ends up being Takashi... who was lying on top of a couple of 'dead' corpses.

"Did... he do all this?" Shizuka asks.

"I... don't think so... some corpses have clean cuts... like a sword cut them apart... the others looked mauled... like an animal attacked them..." Saya turns to look at Saeko as she speaks.

"... Wasn't me... not from what i remember at least... and... i definitely didn't do... that" Saeko responds as she points at the mauled corpses.

"Ahh... Saeko... that apron is... ehehe... very naughty..." Takashi speaks up again... causing the group to turn towards him again.

"... Rei... could you please... wake up Takashi... right now" Saeko 'asks' as she keeps staring at the corpses.

"... Ohh... i will more than 'wake him up'" Rei responds as she walks up to him, her eye twitching as she moved closer.

"Ehehe... Saya... you look really cute with your hair down... Ahh... S... shizuka wait, don't be greedy!" As Takashi kept on dreaming... Saeko looked near the cave's entrance.

"There's a toppled gasoline canister there." She says as she walks up to the canister. After she got next to it she lifts it up and gives it a shake.

"Empty" She then looks around... and notices a sign next to the cave... she goes to it and reads it.

"Underwater pass - this cave is connected to the mainland, under construction, please wear a hard hat before entering" After reading the sign she turns to look at the cave only to see that it was actually blocked off by rocks a little deeper in.

'THUD'

And shortly after... a male shout... Saeko turns around to see Takashi up and about, rubbing his head as he stared at the corpses...

"Huh... what... how... wasn't i... why?..." As Takashi keeps asking half-finished questions, Saya walks up to him.

Before he could even respond, he was hopping on one leg, as Saya stomped off after kicking his shin.

"Wh... what was that for!?" He shouts as he looks at her.

"Ohh you know very well what was that for... pervert!" Saya shouts as she turns around and stomps her foot... then turns around again and continues walking... followed by the rest of the group.

"Huh... what did i do ?!" He then turns towards Saeko, who had taken the canister in her free hand and was walking back towards the rest of the group... she stopped... and stayed quiet for a bit...

"... Maybe... you should learn how to dream without talking in your sleep..." Saeko walks past Takashi after giving him a quick glance...

And several minutes later, the group was sitting by the shack's tables.

"... Why i'm not surprised that the only person we're missing is a certain masked idiot..." Saya looked towards the sea as she spoke, her arms folded.

"I just hope he's alright..." Shizuka speaks up right after.

"Good god, not a single day has passed... and he disappears again?... I swear, we need to put a short leash on him" Saya groans as she shakes her head.

"Maybe he wandered off like Takashi?..." Shizuka asks as she puts her finger on her mouth and looks on the table.

"... I'm worried about that too... we found some of them on the island... we don't know if there are more of them wandering around... i will go look for him" Saeko gets up as she finishes speaking...

"We can't just aimlessly wander around the island, we will never find him like that... Is there... a reason Takashi ended up by that cave? Maybe we can use it as a clue for our search?" Kohta responds.

"Actually... What did you do with that gasoline canister?" Asami asks as she turns to Takashi...

"Uhh... gasoline?" He asks as he lifts his head.

"The empty canister that Saeko found near the cave..." Saya adds up.

"I don't remember why i ended up there... and... i... don't remember doing anything with a gasoline canister..." He answers as he tilts his head... seemingly trying to think.

"Yes, you were to busy fondling a group of female them while fantasizing about... things" Rei responds with an angry frown.

"I uhh..."

"We should focus on finding Naier." Saeko cuts off Takashi before he could speak.

"... Yes... we need to find that idiot before he ends up doing something... stupid..." Saya stares at Takashi with a frown as she speaks.

"Alright... i'll check our equipment" Kohta responds as he gets up and walks towards the door.

"... If he's still sleeping... i wonder what he's dreaming about" Shizuka casually asks as she tilts her head, making both Saya and Saeko snap their heads to her and...

-Somewhere-

(... Ughh... why i do i feel like crap...)

I shake my head and i slowly open my eyes.

(... What... happend yesterday?... I feel like i got hit by train...)

I close my eyes and try to think.

(Saya and Saeko... went nuts... and then i... uhh... i... did... what?)

I open my eyes and stare at the sky...

"W..well... for his own good... it better not be something weird!" I hear a female voice... from... under me?

"So... we will split up in teams and look for him?" Another female voice asks.

"We would cover more ground by going alone... but... it won't be as safe" A male voice answers.

I lean to my right to get a better idea of what exactly was going on... and... in retrospect... a bad idea... as... the moment i realized that for some frigging reason... i was on the fucking roof... i was already falling...

"WHA?!" Was the only thing i managed to say before falling face flat on the sand... I also think i heard a couple of yelps?

"Uhh... The... actual... fughh..." I shake my head as i stay on the ground.

"... We found him!" I hear an excited female voice shout.

"Y... yea..." I hear another female voice answer.

"Did he... just fall from the sky?" I hear a different female voice ask.

"... I think he was just on the roof Shizuka..." I hear a male voice answer.

I then felt a hand on my back...

"Naier... are you alright?" I lift my head to see Saeko kneeling next to me... i nod and slowly get up.

"Why... was i on the roof?" I ask as i look up.

"How are we supposed to know that you idiot?" I turn to look at the annoyed voice to see Saya staring at me with a frown.

"True..." I respond.

"Umm... hey guys?" Kohta speaks up as he exits the shack.

"Did anybody use the dynamites?... we're missing some..." He says shortly after.

(Dynamites?)

I look around to see the gasoline canister.

"Uhh... did we bring gasoline with us?" I ask.

"Umm, no... we found it near a cave... That's also where we found Takashi" Saeko answers.

(... Cave... right... the cave)

"You... know something about it?" Saeko, seeing how i didn't respond, asks as she puts her hand on my shoulder and brings her face to my field of vision.

"Yes... I think..." I answer.

"You think?... Don't tell me you also don't remember what you did yesterday... ughh... idiots" Saya brings her hand to her face and shakes her head.

"You... do?" I ask... and her face instantly goes beet red.

"T... that not the point!" She shouts.

"Uhh... but you're the one who asked m..."

"... F... forget it! J... just say if you know what's the deal with that canister already..." She looks away as she speaks.

"Uhh... yea... right. The cave... was it... open? Or caved in?" I ask.

"Caved in" Saeko answers shortly after.

"Then... i think... i blew it up" I awnser... and the group just... stared at me.

"You... think?... That you might have blown up a cave?... And why... would you do that in the first place" Rei asks.

(Fuck... uhh... how do i tell them that it's connected to the mainland?)

"I... don't remember..." I answer as i dart my eyes around.

"The cave was connected to the mainland" Saeko adds up right after, causing everybody to turn to her.

"There was a sign outside the cave that said so... you... don't remember that?" She asks as he turns to me.

"There... was?" I ask as i tilt my head.

(No really now... there was?)

"Huh... you don't remember that either?... that place was full of 'dead' them... you don't remember that too?" Rei asks.

"... It was?" I ask.

(That's weird... that place was supposed to have like... four corpses... not a group...)

"Yes... some of them were torn apart. As if a wild animal attacked them... the others... looked like they got cut down by a sword... and my sword, was not where i left it... actually..." Saeko looks at the ground before looking at the roof and taking a few steps back.

"I'm pretty sure i found my sword in the same location that you fell..." She says as she walks up to me again.

"... Uhh... sorry... still don't remember anything that seems to add up to what you're saying... still, if i did take your sword... then i hope i didn't chip it" I answer as i look at the Katana, Saeko shakes her head.

"The sword is fine... it's you that i'm worried about... are you sure you're alright?" She asks again.

"Uhh... other than falling from the roof?... i feel fine" I answer.

"... So, what you mean to tell me is that... you took Saeko's sword... waltzed towards a cave that was infested with them... obliterated them along with some giant animal... and then you blew up the cave... and... now don't remember anything?" Saya asks shortly after as she raises an eyebrow and tilts her head.

"Uhh... i... guess?" I respond as i shrug questionably.

"... That's it... i'm getting you a collar and a leash..." She says as she closes her eyes, puts her fingers on her nose's bridge and shakes her head... before i could answer...

"You... didn't get bitten... did you?" Takashi asks.

"I think... i would have already turned if i did" I answer.

"True... so... now what?" He asks... and after a short silence.

"This place... weird as it is... is too good to pass up... but... we still have to get to the police station don't we?... I say we keep this place on the map... but go on with the initial plan... return here after we're

'done'... if we don't find a better place... or get evacuated" I answer as i look at the group...

"Hmm... Yea... sounds like a plan... so... lets pack up?" Takashi asks... and the group nods.

(... Uhh... still... why can't i remember... anything... weird... last thing i remember is Saeko and Saya going after me... then... uhh... whatever... if i don't remember... then it's probably not that important, as long as the cave got blown up then it's fine... also... collar? when did the 'tie up to a chair' evolve to 'collar and a leash'... Saya is becoming way too kinky)

...

Ohh by the way, there will be a poll for this chapter, on the Main/Author/ bio page.

(Huh?! Who the fuck said that!)

Just call the police

"Alright... so... how do we go about this?..."Takashi asks as he stares at the Humvee that was parked in the garage.

"Well, there ain't a lot of ways we 'can' go about this, we take the car, drive close to the station, park it in a secluded spot and check the place out... police or not, i don't think it's a good idea to march over there with a military-grade vehicle... because i'm a hundred percent sure, that if there are people in that place, we'll lose the car and everything in it. I... don't need to tell you in what kind of a tight spot we'll be in if they do take our stuff... and then decide that our problems ain't worth dealing with..." I respond as i look at the Humvee... and take a bite out of the energy bar that i held in my hand...

(Uhh... I'd rather be eating a normal meal right now... but... no time... I guess we could say that we... ate the fish... which we didn't... as they went bad before we could even bring them here...)

"Yea, you're right..." Takashi nods without saying anything else... and... just keeps staring that car.

A couple of seconds later, Kohta walked into the garage. A first aid kit and a coil of blue synthetic rope in his right hand. Three rolls of duct tape and two rock-climbing hooks in his left hand.

"I checked the boat's small front storage and found these. Makes me wonder if the people that used to live here were into extreme sports" He says as he tries to get a better grip on the items in his left hand.

"Rope and duct tape?... Hmm not bad, that's something we either won't need... or need really badly, throw them in." I point at the open trunk as i look at Kohta.

"You know it's a shame these hooks can't be shot from the crossbow we have... it would look really cool if we could tie a rope around them and use them as grappling hooks..." Kohta chuckles as he moves to the back of the Humvee and starts placing the stuff inside...

"Crossbow?" I ask as i finish eating and lower my headgear... Kohta then pulls a Barnett Wildcat C5 out of the trunk... along with three arrows.

"You know, the one we found in Rika's house..." He answers as he looks at the weapon...

(Wait... we took the crossbow with us?... Holy shit, i totally forgot about it...)

"And... why are we not using it? It should be more silent than any gun... plus... you can get the arrows back... right?" I ask as i stare at the weapon in Kohta's hands.

"Well..yea, but we only have three arrows... and to get more, we also need to find some hot glue to actually attach the arrow points and nocks... and this bow can only shoot twenty-inch carbon or aluminum arrows with half-moon nocks..." Kohta stops for a second and looks at the arrows.

"And... while this crossbow 'is' strong... i don't know if the arrow points we have can do the job... or if we need actual broadheads, as the points we have are 'target points' which are normally used for target practice, not hunting. Now if we do need broadheads... we'll probably need the expandable ones. And then... you also need to know how to 'draw' the crossbow correctly, so it won't end up causing damage to the arrow or it self... also, you must never dry fire it" As Kohta kept talking... he... uhh... started going from 'why we're not using this crossbow'... to...'How to use this crossbow'... and... while i did read a little about crossbows... well.

"... You lost me on...'this is a crossbow'.." I respond with a deadpan voice... Kohta just turns to look at me... and blinks a couple of times...

"Well, take a seat then. " He says as he starts talking... again...

(Well... knowing a thing or two about it... could be helpful)

And so... while Kohta was filling my head with crossbows, arrowheads, arrow points, knocks and stuff can't even fucking pronounce... the rest of the group slowly gathered into the garage...

And... about forty minutes later...

"... You can also find information on how to pull the string in the manual. It was inside the locker next to the crossbow so i took it with me... oh... and the 'handle' is normally called stirrup." And then... he stops talking... to... take a breath.

"Do you want me to explain how..."

"Uhh Kohta, the group is waiting... we should get going." I cut him off as i point at the group... which... also had a visibly annoyed Rei inside... not that i blame her... she doesn't know her father isn't at the station... or... that he's still alive.

"Right... sorry everybody" Kohta gets up, puts the crossbow and arrows back into the trunk, then slams it shut.

"We're all set to go!" He says as he turns towards the group and makes a thumbs-up motion.

And so, after opening the front gate, we all enter the vehicle... and drive off.

(We aren't going to close the gate huh... shame... it was a nice place... oh well)

I turn my head away from the door window that was to my left and look straight ahead, at the backside of the driver's seat...

"Learned how to use a crossbow?" Saeko, who was sitting next to me, leaned her body slightly forward before turning to look at me.

"If having a forty five minute long chat taught me how to use that thing efficiently... then i'd know how to use satellite cannons by now" I say in a joking manner as i also turn to look at her.

"Umm, that... would actually depend... mostly on the interface. If it's user friendly or not... like, how does it navigate? Does it have a joystick? Or it only uses LAT and LONG commands that you need to type in via a keyboard?"... And Kohta, who was once again sitting on the 'leg section' of the car that was behind the front passenger seat and in front of Takashi and Rei, speaks up again.

"Wow... Kohta, how do you know so much!" Asami who was sitting on his legs turns around to look directly at him...

"Ehehe, well..." He then gets all flustered and starts scratching the back of his head. I chuckle, shake my head, and turn to look outside the window again.

(Mister killjoy... heh...)

I put my hand under my chin as i keep staring outside...

(Arigh... So, now... We... have the police station, let's focus on that...

Though... the being said, there ain't a lot to think about... or anything that i want to 'change'... we go there... the place is empty, Rei almost has a nervous breakdown while being a total bitch... we get three new guns along with a couple of lower quality handguns and some ammo... we then find about the evacuation... and that Rei's dad is also there... and then... we leave... if... anything else

happens... then i'll see to it then... i need to... get used on doing that anyway.)

The rest of the trip was... pretty much uneventful... and quiet, as apparently, nobody could think of a topic to chat about... because... you know... for the others, we were close to finding Rei's father... or what remained of him... so... we all kept quiet.

... Until...

"Gunshots!" Rei shouts as several gunshots echoed in the distance... loud enough to be actually be heard even with the car's engine running... meaning... we were getting close.

(You know... i always wondered... who did fire off these shots?... Corpses with twitching fingers?... It wasn't just one shot though... more like five or six of them... maybe from a gun that was set to fully auto? In any case.)

"If we heard gunshots, then we definitely need to hide the car before we go in there" I turn to look at the group as i speak.

"Huh, why? My dad works as a police detective there, he w..."

"No i agree with Naier on this one, it's not just your dad that will be there... and if a higher ranking officer decides that the car should be taken from us, then we'll be left to go on on foot... and we're not done yet... we still need to find your mother... and my mother" Takashi cuts Rei off before she could finish... yet, she just turns to him and nods without much of a fuss.

"Well... if you're going to do something, then Asami thinks that you should probably do it quickly, the Police station is not very far from here" Asami speaks up right after.

"You were stationed here Asami? But you said that you didn't know my father" Rei asks as she turns to stare at the police girl.

(Huh... is his face in the entry test or something?)

"Ahh, A..Asami was still a new member there... she didn't manage to meet all the people that worked in that station... before... this happened" Her voice trails off as she speaks.

"Well... should i park around here somewhere?" Shizuka asks while keeping her eyes on the road.

"Hmm... i can't see any place where we could hide the car though..." Takashi answers... and sadly... he was right.

(We're surrounded by houses and multistoried buildings... there's... nothing we can use around here to hide the car in... or... wait...)

"What about an alleyway?... If it's narrow enough it can block the doors, then the only entrance... and exit would be the hatch... which... uhh... locksss... form the inside... yea... no... never mind we can't, no wait, we can open the trunk with the keys..." I put my hand under my chin as i speak... and...

"I hope you didn't burn too many brain cells while thinking of all of that..." Saya turns around to look at me from the front passenger seat. A slight smirk on her face.

(Ohh Laugh it up would ya...)

"Uhh... yea... i can't see any other way so... let's try that" Takashi responds.

And so, after Shizuka tried to squeeze the car into a couple of alleyways and ended up trading paint with the wall before realizing that they were way too narrow for the car to pass through... we finally found an alleyway between two multistory buildings that was just bearylly wide enough to fit the car in.

"Ok, Like always Shizuka, engine off, let the car roll in until it stops." I say as i look at the wall to my left.

(Well... we're sandwiched between to very high walls... it'll probably be rather dark here even in the middle of the day... except for when then the sun is directly on top of the alleyway that is... still, much better than leaving the car in the middle of the street)

"Are we... really going to leave the car here like this?... I don't know, it seems... risky" Kohta asks. I turn my head to him... only to see that he was actually staring at me...

(Why you say we and then look at me dude, i ain't the frigging leader here)

... Yet... nobody said a thing...

(Oh for fuck's sake)

"Well for good measure, we will also cover it up with the urban net that we used to hide the things in the trunk... that's all we can do for now" I glance at the net behind me as i speak.

And... a couple of seconds later... the car came to a complete stop...

"Ok... we'll exit from the hatch right? Let's go" Takashi moves to exit through the hatch as he speaks... and one by one, we start leaving the car.

Right before getting up, i also grab the net along with Kohta, and once out, we close the hatch and somehow manage to cover the Humvee while half of the group was still standing on it... after making sure that Shizuka didn't forget the keys inside of course... though... now that i think of it... that sounds more like 'my' field of expertise...

I then turn to look towards the direction we came from... i didn't see any corpses... but...

"We go from the way we entered?" I ask as i point at the entrance we used.

"Hmm... well, we can go on from that way... but... if we leave from the other side of this alleyway, the police station should be just around the corner" Asami turns around as she points in the opposite direction.

"As long as we can return the same way, then it works for me" Takashi responds as he jumps down from the car's hood and motions us to follow him.

I just shrugged and followed the rest. Saeko, waited for me to jump off the car, and then starting walking next to me... and... i also noticed something...

(You know, Saya... might have been right... about Saeko staring at me more... and no, that was not a complaint...)

Now, as for the path we took. We did have a couple of corpses that roamed the narrow path, but, they were too spread out. So Rei, who was at the front of the group, dispatched them without any real trouble, seeing that the way she fights consists mostly of forwarding stabbing... meaning the narrow path did not hinder her too much.

It then took us a couple of minutes until we finally exited the alleyway. Asami then pointed towards the right... and... i could actually see a tall building that looked like the police station from the manga not too far from here. It was on the road after the intersection that was to our right, on the opposite side of the street, if taking our current position into consideration...

I could also see cop cars parked there... and one of them... was toppled... or more like, whoever drove that car, ended up making it slide on its right side... before slamming its roof to a railing... I don't know if Rei didn't see the frigging wreck of a car, but... she just dashed ahead of us without saying a word...

"Rei!" Takashi shouts as he runs after her...

"No barikades... no people on guard... and a police car left embedded to a railing... i don't think she's going to like what comes next..." I say as i also start running after the two.

"Naier... you should not interfere... this is something that's between the two of them" I hear Saeko say as she also starts running beside me.

"I got no intention of interfering... but we should keep the perimeter safe... i get the feeling things might get... loud... shouty type of loud..."... I turn to look at Saeko as i finish speaking... she blinks a couple of times... before nodding.

And... The moment we reached Rei and Takashi...

"W... what's going on! We heard gunshots earlier!" Rei shouts.

(OOOOokkk, here we go, Rei is about to go full bitch mode... Yea, i want nothing to do with this...)

As Takashi starts speaking, i walk past them and head straight towards the building's entrance, the whole field in front of the building was relatively huge and had like... three corpses?... That all roamed towards a shouting Rei... in either case, they were nowhere near the entrance, so i just casually walked up to the half-open sliding glass doors...

(Like in the anime both the inside and the outside doors have been forced open. Enough for a person to squeeze through... still... the insides are clean... clean as in no blood on the floor, as i can still see a lot of papers scattered around... but that's about it, no bullet casings, no broken things...)

"The insides look clear" I nearly jumped in place as i heard a voice to my left. I dart my head to see Saeko right next to me. looking inside the building through the glass door.

(... Holy shit, when did she even...)

She then turns to look at me... and tilts her head with a questioning look.

"Is something the matter Naier?" She asks.

"Nothing, just didn't realize you got here... but yea, you're right, the insides... 'do' look clear... i think... we better inform certain people of it... before they end up going berserk..." I motion towards Takashi and Rei with my head as i turn around, Saeko responds with a nod and starts walking behind me, and the moment we got near the group.

"So, i think they all left while we were still at the mall." I hear Saya talk.

"Plus, the insides look clear, no blood, no bullet casings... worse i saw... was papers on the floor" I add up right after her.

(Good thing Saya mentioned that the people here bailed while the group was still at the mall... had she said the island... ohh boy, i'd have one angry ass Rei on my face right now...)

"So everybody is gone?..." Alice asks.

"I don't know, guess there is only one way to find out" Takashi looks at the building's entrance as he speaks.

"let's go then. We got... unwanted guests coming our way" I look around at the oncoming corpses as i speak.

The group nods, and then we all head into the Police station. The moment we got in, Kohta closed the inside doors... though, i don't know if these glass doors can hold back a corpse... tempered or laminated glass maybe?... I then glance around the room.

(Well... looks the same as in the manga on the inside too...

Less than a meter ahead of me, two rows of cozy looking seats that extended towards the wall that was straight ahead, they were also positioned in such a way that made the rows be 'back to back'.

Further in and a slightly to my right... i could see the map... on the wall that faced the exit doors... the corridor that we'd probably end up taking was straight ahead and a bit to my left, that's also where the wall with the map ended... deeper in that corridor, i could also see a toilet sign... that's... where the corpse couple should be at...

Now... To my left... over a small counter-like wall, i could see desks... a lot of them...

To my right... a long counter, that ran all the way from where i'm standing, to the wall with the map that was straight ahead... the counter didn't go all the way from wall to wall through. There were also a couple of big cement pylons that extend from the counter all the way up to the ceiling... and behind the counter... a wall that stopped before actually reaching the 'map wall'... so in other words... there was also another corridor behind the counter, on the far end... i could also see two doors on the wall that was behind the counter... police stations have reception rooms?... huh... got no idea.

And behind me... the doors... a vending machine... and some weird-ass, human-sized mascot.)

"There is actually a little blood on the floor here" Rei speaks up as she kneels down and looks at the floor next to the seats.

"The doors were half-open, meaning 'somebody' opened them after the E.M.P. blast... could be the police officers who left the building... but i'd expect the doors to be left wide open if that was the case... so... somebody came in after they all left?" I look towards the map as i speak.

"Asami you know where they keep any of the ammo and guns here?" Kohta asks as he walks away from the door and stops next to

the cop girl that was looking at the giant, pink, humanoid mouse mascot that stood next to the door.

"Umm... Asami only knows that they kept the confiscated items on the third floor..." She lowers her head as she speaks.

"Hmm... we should keep our eyes open then, while we have ammo in the Humvee, it won't hurt to have more, so let's look for any guns and ammo... then, we'll look for clues about Rei's Dad" Takashi then turns to Saya.

"Anything else we should keep in mind?" And while he was asking that, i went to look at the map.

(Hey, Derp-two, how do we hide something?... I don't know Derp-one... let's start... by not putting a name on it... after we have first named everything else of course...

I mean... that's what i'm looking at here... the only room that's left blank... is the armory)

"Can't you think for your self?" Saya frowns as she folds her arms.

"Well, a leader usually has people to help him strategize... right?" He says with an awkward laugh... Saya frowns but doesn't speak up...

She then walks up to me... or well... comes to look at the map... while in the meantime, i turn around to leave.

"Hey, you're already here, don't be an idiot and make your self useful." She says as she turns to me and puts her hands on her hips, while also leaning her upper body slightly forward.

"Uhh... i'd really want to... but uhhh... burnt too many brain-cells... me no can think" I respond with a deadpan voice... Saya narrows her eyes and glares at me... with... quite the mean-ass frown if i might add...

(That's... one angry hamster... she really doesn't like getting side jabbed ehh?... Ahh well, i 'should' help her, lest she starts thinking that i'm actually trying to avoid her... as i get the feeling that giving her the cold shoulder treatment... won't end well... as she'll probably end up being even more toxic to me.)

I turn to the map and point at it.

"There's one room in the back left side that has no information on it, if it's something that the Police don't want others to see, then it might be something worth looking at" I turn to Saya as i finish speaking.

"See, was not that hard now was it?" She says as she corrects her posture, folds her arms and smirks at me... I just... shake my head and turn to look at the group.

"Back room towards the left then?" Takashi asks, Both Saya and i nod.

"... Asami feels so useless... this was the building she was stationed, yet she can't even help" Asami drops her head as Kohta puts his hand on her shoulder.

"Asami... Hirano, Naier, can you keep an eye out while we look for the room?" Takashi then motions for Rei and Saeko to follow him... Saeko..gave me a quick glance before following the other two.

(Hey?! Where are you taking my samurai!?)

And... the moment they got near the toilets... Takashi and the two girls... found the 'corpsified' couple, as it crawled outside, attracted to the noise... i... don't need to mention how fast they got rid of them do i?... I almost felt bad for these two...

And shortly after that, they found the door. Then called for the rest of the group to come over... and... like in the manga, the door was locked with a Numpad lock... Rei then asked if Asami knew the passcode... only for Kohta to mention that the lock didn't function

anymore because of the E.M.P... talk about a nice save... and then, Saya pulled out that weird drill thing... and after giving it to Kohta, she then turned to me with her arms folded and a grin like she just saved the world... i think she wanted a head pat...

"What would we do without you?" I respond with a very silent chuckle as Saya kept basking in the glory.

(Well, the truth is... that she did save us, this one might be empty, but the room with the confiscated gear was also locked, and that one... did have ammo and guns inside... anyway the stairs are right behind us... so)

As Kohta keeps drilling, i walk up to Saeko.

"The second floor is near, if there are corpses near the stairs they will hear the drilling..." I stare at the stairs as i speak, Saeko glances at me and nods before turning to look at the stairs as well...

And so, while Kohta was trying to open the door... i just... stared... around...

Until...

"AHH... finally..." Kohta leans back and puts his hands on the floor behind his back, then he takes a few deep breaths... yet, before he could say anything else.

"Naier!" I hear Saeko shout, i turn around to see a corpse on the stairs.

"T..thats Officer Kato..." Rei freezes the moment she sees the corpse.

"Looks like he was trying to commit suicide after getting bit" Saeko runs up the steps as she speaks, and stabs the officer in the head. At the same moment, a second corpse became visible as it

shambled down from the upper floor. I let go of the shotgun, pull the bokken, and run up the stairs.

(Guess it's about time i did something)

I stop on the last step and hit the hilt of the sword on the metal handrail, causing the corpse to focus on me...

I then 'stab' its leg while holding the bokken with my left hand and grab its shirt with my right. Crouching down, i then pull my right arm under the top part of the handrail. The corpse, while it did manage to grab my right arm, ended up landing with its neck against the railing. I then turn to look at Saeko... she... licked her lips with a slight smirk as she raised her sword over her head with both arms, only to bring it down a second later, chopping the corpse's head off like an executioner.

"Go look inside! Me and Naier can hold them off!" Saeko shouts as she glances at the group that was by the door.

And... the moment they disappeared into the room... she turns to look at the decapitated corpse, her chest visibly moving as she took deep breaths... and her face... visibly as flushed...

(Oh boy... is she?...)

"That was... way more exciting than i... expected it to be..." She closes her eyes and lifts her head to 'look' at the ceiling. Taking deeper, and slower breaths... until she finally calmed down.

"I am... sorry... but... could I hope that... you won't mind helping me... fight like this some times... i..." She turns to stare at me as she speaks. I... just put my hand on her head and ruffle her hair without speaking... she in turn, closes her eyes and giggles with a smile as her head swayed lightly from side to side...

(... I'm seriously... getting cuteness overload right now...)

And just then.

"Arrghh! Of course! The police got deployed throughout the city! Of course, they would take their guns and ammo with them! Why didn't i realize this sooner!" I hear Saya shout from inside the room.

"We're done then! Saya! Where should we go to find information on where the police force went!" Takashi shouts right after.

"Ahh! Wait! Can we check the room Asami mentioned! The confiscated items are not owned by the Police, they should still be there!" Kohta shouts right after.

"Right! Third floor!" Takashi bolts out of the room and turns to look at us as he runs up the stairs.

"We..."

"Third floor, confiscated equipment. You guys were shouting so loud i would probably hear you all the way from the frigging Humvee" I respond as i put my finger over my mouth in a 'silence' motion... Takashi's eyes then go wide.

"Oh, crap... right..." He shakes his head and turns to the group.

"Kohta, don't forget the drill. Naier, Saeko can you guard the rear? Me and Rei will go up front" He says as he turns to us, and we both nod.

And like that, we went up to the second floor and then to the third... Takashi then told us to wait at the stairs, while he looked at the hallway up ahead... and after a couple of seconds.

"Not too many here, let's go." Takashi motions us with his hand as he keeps looking at the hallway.

(The riot gear dude should be around here)

I kept my eyes to my right as the group started running down the hallway... until finally, i saw a corpse that was inside a room, a little further off from the doorframe, a silenced MP5 hanging on its side as it slowly moved towards us.

(Found ya)

I lightly tap Saeko on the shoulder, and the moment she turns to me, i point at the corpse... she looks at it... and nods.

"Takashi, what we need is weapons right?" She asks.

"Right." Takashi responds.

"Then, these... should do!" She slides in front of the armed corpse before turning her back to it, then passes the blade right through its head.

(... They're... black... uhh... Three, two, one)

"YAAHOOO!" Kohta pretty much leaps on the fallen corpse as he shouts, with Saeko bearily managing to slide aside.

I then also walk up to the corpse... kneel down and look at it...

(He... is bigger than me... damn... different size... well... there was the part that the gear he had might have been infected... especially the helmet, gloves and vest... both the helmet and the gloves have been in contact with the dead body for god knows how long... and the vest... is smeared with blood that dripped from its mouth, so yea... that one is definitely not worth the risk... shame i can't take the helmet and vest... but even if i could... they're too big for me... the leg and arm guards 'should' be fine to take... but... uhh... too big)

As i look at the corpse, i notice the handgun and the leg holster.

(Beretta M92 Vertec... preety sleek gun... or well, i think it looks nice... that don't mean that the P220 i got looks bad but... uhh... i

like this design more... still, both this and the MP5 use 9x19mm's... and thankfully we have plenty of that... as one of the crates we took is full of em... in either case... let's see if Saeko will turn me down again)

I grab the handgun and take the holster off the corpse's leg, then take the extra two magazines that Kohta had already taken off the corpse along with their holster. Then i get up, and go to Saeko... she glances at the gun... before turning to stare at me without saying anything.

"Not getting out of it this time i'm afraid, we have extra guns." I put the gun in the holster and toss it slightly into the air before grabbing it again... Saeko smiles... and closes her eyes before letting the air out of her lungs. She then opens her eyes and looks at me.

"You'll teach me how to use it?" She 'asks'...

Well, the answer is pretty obvious... yet... right before i could answer... i notice... right from the corner of my eye... that Saya was staring at the ground with a frown... or more like... she was staring at the gun in her hand... before 'hiding' it behind her back and turning to look outside the window... I turn to look back at Saeko to see that she was also looking towards the direction i was looking at a second ago.

(Did i turn my head?)

"Of course, just come to me or Kohta whenever you need help." As i answer Saeko turns to me and nods with a smile. She takes the gun with the holster along with the magazines... and... looks at them.

"So... where do i... put these?" She asks as she tilts her head.

"Well, they are both leg holsters, so gun on one leg, magazine on the other... Now... the corpse 'is' wearing pants... and the holster doesn't have any blood on it... but... you know... just to be safe...

see if you can clean it up a bit first..." Saeko nods as she keeps looking at the gun.

"Ahh i found it! The door is right here!" Asami shouts as she waves at us from the end of the hallway...

"Great!" Kohta shouts as he, along with the rest of the group, start running towards Asami.

"Ohh for crab's sake... do they always have to shout?..." I groan as i turn to look at the group... and... i hear Saeko giggle... i turn to look at her and...

"I... just said that out loud didn't i..."... she nods.

"Go on, i will wear these... and catch up to you." She says as she places the holster on her leg and turns to look at it. I nod and turn around.

(Helping her train on how to use a gun... uhh... yea... no pressure...)

I then focus on Saya...

(And then we have her... she obviously 'can't' use her gun efficiently... hell i've never even seen her shoot it... other than that one time in the estate, when i was stuck on the car... and she didn't seem to fare very well then either... plus when Kohta tried to instruct her... she went ballistic... and... judging from the reaction she had when Saeko asked me to help her... she seems to understand that she doesn't know to how to use it...)

And... as i kept walking towards the group, the door to the confiscated items... opened wide.

(Holy shit, Kohta is fast with that drill...)

The group then went inside and disappeared into the relatively dark room. By the time i got in, Takashi was holding the Benelli M4 in his

hands.

"Ohhh Naier, Naier, Naier! You will never believe what we found in here!" Kohta almost rips the gun out of Takashi's hands runs up to me.

"It's a..."

"Shotgun" I replied with a deadpan face...

"No! It's a frigging Benelli M4, and now it's yours!" He pretty much shoves the gun into my face as he keeps shouting...

"You know... i would normally say that we should stick to pump-action... less automated parts, less chance for something to get stuck, broken or jammed... but I've heard that this certain shotgun is pretty good, considering durability and shot count" As i speak Kohta puts his hand under his chin and grins.

"And you heard right, this baby has been tested to shoot up to twenty-five thousand rounds without having any major malfunction! And there's more! This one has a tube extension too! So it can hold up to seven rounds plus one in the chamber! That's more than the normal tube even after you ghost load it! And it also has a door breach choke that you can use to stab stuff with!" Yea... kohta was drolling... but... well...

"Black 'is' my favorite color... so... yea... Takashi, want the Ithaca? Or you'll be going with that aluminum bat until you club everything to death? Also... Kohta... won't stabbing stuff with the gun's muzzle cause the blood and guts to run down into the gun's barrel? Especially if it's pointed upwards and there's a way for the excess air in the barrel to escape..." I undo the sling and give the pump-action shotgun to Kohta... then start fixing the new gun on me.

"Hmm, i guess, it 'can' happen... this gun does have a corrosion-resistant finish... but... well... you know your guns! So stab based

on circumstance!" Kohta turns around as he speaks and runs towards Takashi.

"Uhh, I don't even know how to use it though..." Takashi responds as Kohta shoves the gun at him.

"Ohhh it's easy! Just aim, shoot, pump and shoot again! I will show you the stance you need to have and the way to reload and pump correctly, so you don't end up causing damage to the shotgun, or your self" Takashi keeps looking at the gun as Kohta starts speaking.

(Yea, way to dodge the fact that you just told me to stab a bag full of liquid with a spiked hollow tube that can break down if it gets wet inside... heh... anyway... it's... a bit heavier than the old one... but...) I close the retractable stock and let the gun hang on the side.

(Yep, with the stock closed this feels way better, better than the Ithaca at least, as the wooden stock was obviously not retractable.)

As i lift my head, i see Takashi nodding and lifting the shotgun, then pointing it straight... and straight was...

(OH HOLY FRIGGING SHIT !) I jump to the side and fall face flat on a couple of boxes, behind one of the storage shelves... right next to Saya.

"YIAAA!"... I lift my head... to see Saya with both hands slightly over her head, her eyes as wide as they could be as she stared at me...

"Ahh! Never point your gun at somebody you are not trying to kill! Not even for fun! Not even if it's empty!" Kohta shouts.

"Well, that gun is definitely NOT empty... uhh... at least the safety was still on when i gave you that thing..." I respond as i get up.

"Uhh, Sor..."

"What happened?!" Before Takashi could finish, Saeko bursts in the room with her sword drawn.

"Nothing, Takashi is just... learning how to use his new gun..." I respond as i dust my self off.

"If it was 'nothing' then why did you just jump like that you crazy stupid idiot?! " Saya, with her face completely red, leans her upper body forward and throws her arms back as she stomps her foot to the ground.

"So... you'd rather see me getting blasted by a shotgun at point-blank?... Mean... i didn't know you hated me that much" I respond with a slight grin.

"T... that's not what i said you frigging idiot... ughh... i nearly had a heart attack because of you!" She then closes her eyes and takes a deep breath.

"... Sorry, didn't mean to scare you Saya... but... yea... Takashi, never point a gun at somebody you don't want dead." I take a step back and turn to look at Takashi. He nods as he looks at the now lowered gun.

"Well... at least nobody got hurt" Saeko responds.

"Ye... aaa..." Takashi lifts his head to look at Saeko and freezes... followed shortly after by Kohta... who seconds later... had a trail of blood running down his nose...

(Maybe i should try the Benelli... on them...)

Saeko looks at the guys... and tilts her head... then turns her whole body around to look at me, the gun strapped on one thigh and the magazines strapped on the other...

"Is... something wrong?... Did... i wear it wrong?" Saeko moves her leg slightly to the side and touches the ground with the tip of her boot as she turns to look at the gun on her thigh, revealing more of the holster and well... more of her leg...

Before i could speak... or much less get a good look... i found my self unable to see... as... somebody ended up covering my eyes?

"Ahhh! S... Saeko what exactly do you think you're doing?!" I hear Saya shout right next to my ear.

(Did she... seriously just cover my eyes? Uhh... whatever...)

"Does it bother you when you move?" I ask as i fold my arms and then lift one arm to the high of my chin before pointing one finger to the ceiling.

"Umm... no" I hear Saeko answer... her voice sounded... forced... like she was holding her self back from... laughing...

"Does it... move out of place when you move?" I ask as i point a second finger to the ceiling, my eyes still covered by Saya's hands...

"... no..." I hear Saeko answer in a slightly lower tone...

"Can you reach it without completely stretching your arm?" I ask and point a third finger up.

"Y... Yes" She answers.

"Then... you're all good... so... uhh..." I trail off as lower my arm.

"Saya... question... why do your hands smell like strawberries?" And the moment i asked that...

"Wha?!... What are you sniffing at you pervert?!" Saya pulls both hands from my mask.

"You kind of had one of your hands over my nose" I answer as i turn to look at her. She was leaning backward, both hands folded and over her chest as she glared at me with a frown... her face... still red...

"That doesn't mean that you can just go ahead and take a sniff you weirdo!" Saya then shoves one hand in her short's pocket before pulling it back up in order to throw a small plastic tube at me...

The item bounces off my mask. Yet, i managed to catch it before it could actually fall to the ground... then... i looked at it.

"Strawberry hand cream... holy crap, my sense of smell is actually better than i thought" I say as i nod to my self.

"Aaaa... give..."

"Wow Saya! Your hands do smell amazing! Can i have some of that cream please!" Shizuka... was already next to Saya, sniffing her hands.

"Really?! I want some too!" Asami was the second one to creep up next to her... only to then be followed by a giggling Alice... who... i think she just wanted in on the hype, as she was just waving a flashlight around.

Rei... didn't join in... and i think she looked a bit... annoyed?... But... she didn't react, Takashi went to her and whispered something, she turned to him and reluctantly nodded... well... she is here to look for her dad... and the group is goofing off... so i sort of understand... but it's moments like these that... how to say it... take off the edge.

"Arghh! Fine, fine! Just stop sniffing my hands already you weirdos!" Saya shouts as she runs up to me... then goes behind me and starts pushing me...

"You started this! You fix it!" She shouts as she keeps pushing.

"Uhh... ok... here's the hand cream..." I say as i toss the tube to Asami.

"Thanks!" She responds with a giggle.

"Asami! Don't use it all by your self! I want some too!" Shizuka whines as she leans on Asami while trying to reach for the tube...

"Whatever happens from here... ain't my fault... Still, if i knew that half the group would go nuts over hand cream, i wouldn't have mentioned it, i'll get you another one when i get the chance" I say as i turn around and look at Saya... she lifts her head and looks at me with a perplexed expression...

"... You... really are an idiot..." She folds her arms and turns to 'look' at the boxes next to her... i chuckle... and walk outside of the room...

The moment i got out, i noticed that Saeko was also outside, leaning her back against the wall that was to my right.

"Uhh... nothing popped up? It got a bit... noisy in there for a sec" I ask as i look around.

"No, the second floor seems to be empty..." Saeko replies as she shakes her head and turns to look at me.

"I see..." I nod as i walk past her and then lean my back on the wall, next to her.

"You sure you don't want any of that hand cream? The other seems to have gone crazy about it" I turn to look at her as i ask.

"... You... like the scent of strawberries?" She tilts her head slightly as she asks.

(Is she always going to return my questions with whether 'i' like it or not now?... heh)

"I'm indifferent..." I say with slight a shrug... Saeko just nodded without replying.

We... then spent the next couple of minutes in silence as the group inside made...'noise'... Until Takashi walked out the door and turned

to look at the two of us.

"Ready to keep going?" I ask as i fold my arms.

"Yea, Kohta gathered all the ammo and extra handguns guns in his bag, we're heading to the top floor now, communications office, for any information we can find."

I kick my self off the wall and nod.

And shortly after, we were on the move again.

(... Find the computer... go to the neighborhood where Rei lived, find Rei's mother... and then... then...)

Then the real fight begins.

No more hand-holding

"Clear!..."

"... Oh, for crab's sake... did you really have to shout it out loud?" I dart my head around before turning to look at Kohta while he was peeking inside the communications room, the MP5 in his hands... If you're wondering what happened to the AR-10... well let's just say that Asami looked... funny right now... and from the way she was holding her big new gun... i'd say that she's rather afraid of it...

"Uhh... sorry... it's just that... i always wanted to say that..." He responds with a meek grin as he turns to me...

"Well, i can't see any them coming from behind... maybe we cleared out the station? Still, don't let your guard down" Saya speaks up right after.

(True, we did kill most of the corpses while coming up here... but still...)

"In either case, we should check inside for any information" Takashi points at the open door that led into the communications room.

The group nodded and moved inside... and the first thing everybody noticed was that...

"Everything is off... the equipment here wasn't emp resistant..." Takashi sighs as he looks around, glancing at the computers that stretched across the room in three long rows. With the first row being next to us and the third row being the furthest away, on the other side of the room.

(Not that surprising really... even the army can't fully EMP-proof their installations... the police... really didn't have much of a chance.)

"Hey, that computer is still working..." Alice speaks up as she points at the only functioning screen in the third row and Saya instantly runs towards that computer...

"It's... the J-alert system! It's still working!" Saya shouts the moment she looks at the screen...

(Ok... what's with all the shouting?)

"J-What?" Takashi asks... and Kohta... starts explaining what the J-alert system is with an excited voice... and by excited... i mean loud. But his explanation did cause the group to gather around the working computer... well... other than me and Saeko, i stayed by the first 'row' of desks... Saeko... she...

"How come it's still running?... Did somebody fix a nearby powerplant?" She asks as she pulls a tissue out of the small tissue box that was left on a table in the first row... then walks up to me... and... starts poking my mask with the tissue...

"Uhh... what gives?" I ask in a low tone as i stare at a smiling Saeko...

"Inconceivable!" Saya shouts as she starts to feverishly type on the keyboard.

"You had some blood on your mask..." Saeko responds as she tilts her head slightly.

"And no, i think it's running on backup battery power... it must be on alert mode, that's probably why it lasted so long too" Saya answers as she keeps looking at the screen.

"Ohh, like they have in hospitals" Shizuka responds...

(... Funny how everybody is too busy staring at the screen to even notice Saeko... she... never did do something like this in the manga... did she?... Come to think of it. She does seem a bit

more... uhh... how to name it... affectionate?... Compared to how she acted with Takashi...)

Saeko then lowers her hand, walks to a nearby bin and tosses the tissue. And then... silence... the only sound being heard, was that of keyboard buttons being tapped...

A couple of minutes passed like that... with nobody saying a thing... until...

"Do you know what you're doing?" Rei asks while sitting on a table, resting her cheek on her hand.

"This was designed to be simple enough for even a kid to use!... but ARGHHH!" Saya stops typing and grabs the corners of the screen with her hands as she shouts...

"What's wrong? Takashi asks.

"... I... can't find the search function..." Saya responds in a low tone as she turns around and lowers her head slightly... all the while... i stared at Alice as she sneaked up to the computer and pushed a random button on the keyboard...

(Alice roll's luck...)

Saya glances at Alice before turning back to Takashi... then snaps her head back at her.

"W... what are you doing you stupid munchkin!" She shouts... again...

(Seriously... Let's just just rename this place into the shout room, ya?...)

"S... sorry... i couldn't help it" Alice apologizes with tears in her eyes as she lowers her head. Takashi then closed his eyes and nodded with a serious expression... to the point... that you'd think that he was actually thinking of something important...

Saya then turns her head towards the screen with a heavy sigh.

"Seriously, can't i take my... Wha..." And freezes as she keeps staring at the screen... that now showed the evacuation plans...

(And Alice rolls critical on the first roll, critical on the second roll and critical on the third roll... The static electricity in Alice's hand short wires the computer, causing it to acquire self-awareness and search itself...)

"This... Nice going munchkin!" Saya... shouts as she keeps looking at the computer...

(I will check outside... just in case)

I walk out of the room and take a look around as the group kept talking.

(Yet, no corpses... did we really clear this place out?)

"Is something wrong?" I didn't even manage to turn around in order to return into the room... and Saeko was already behind me.

(Uhhh... is she... following me around?... She crept up behind me when i was by the building's front door too... huh...)

"We're being too loud, i needed to make sure that we didn't attract any attention" I answer as i glance around... she just nodded and turned to look at the stairs...

Me and Saeko then stayed outside for a couple of seconds... until..

"Still... evacuation... not backup?" Takashi asks as he stops by the door's frame.

"You have seen how bad things are here... they are probably trying to focus on getting survivors to safety first" Saya responds as she exits the room and starts going towards the stairs.

"The plan is to go there then" Takashi responds as he begins walking behind her.

"Yes, but we need to hurry, the extraction will only last for a couple of hours in the early afternoon... tomorrow" Saya answers as she stops walking and turns to look at him.

(Wait... early afternoon?... in the manga it was 'just' afternoon...)

"And... where it's happening? " Takashi asks as he walks past her and stops by the stairs.

"Shintoko third elementary school" Saya's voice became more... serious... and both Rei and Takashi tensed up the moment they heard the location... and while the group kept talking, i pulled the watch out of my pocket.

(... It's five and forty... we have less than half a day... and i'm not counting the night... while we did leave the estate in the middle of the night... i really don't think that it's a smart idea to go off driving in pitch black darkness... The corpses are already blind, so they won't be affected by the lack of light... and... the headlights will make us shine like a lighthouse for the ones that 'can' see... and i don't know what's worse between the two. Both can...)

"Hey hold on! And what about my parents!" Rei's loud shout knocks me out of my thoughts.

(Huh, wait we reached this part already?... uhh... ok...)

"The initial reason we came here, was to look for Rei's dad, so... let's go do what we came for?" I turn to Takashi as i 'ask'... He nods and puts his hand on Rei's shoulder, who was already next to him by the stairs.

"Of course, your dad comes first, do you know where his office is?" Takashi asks... and Rei's face instantly lights up as she nods.

"Y... yes! Follow me, it's on the second floor!" She shouts. And so, we followed Rei as she ran down the stairs to the second floor and then started sprinting through the hallways.

(... And all caution went out of the window...)

"There, it's that room!" She shouts as she points at a door that had a sign that wrote 'public safety division' on it... and...

"Dad!" She shouts as she bursts through the door...

(... Screaming out the top of your lungs as you smash into an unchecked, closed room? In the middle of a frigging zombie apocalypse?... Seriously... What the fuck?...)

Still, i kept that thought to my self... as... well...

"There's... nobody here..." Rei's lively attitude instantly plummeted to a negative degree... and the whole group just... stared at the empty room...

(And the whole atmosphere just went to shit...)

I glance at the whiteboard... and notice... that i could actually read the backside from where i was standing... or... you know, see the letters, as they were upside down.

(Ohh... perfect... let's skip this whole shindig, no?...)

I slightly nod to my self and start walking towards the whiteboard...

"Naier... can you and Saeko keep an eye out?" Takashi grabs my arm as i walk past him...

(... oh Jeez)

"There's something written on that whiteboard" As i say that, Rei turns her head to me. Takashi just raises an eyebrow and tilts his head... then lets go of my arm.

I walk over to the whiteboard... flip it... and Rei instantly shouts that this was her dad's handwriting...

"How did you even... do you have x-ray vision or something?" Kohta asks as he stares at the whiteboard...

"Nah, it was visible from where i was standing, no such thing as superpowers i'm afraid" I answer as i tilt my head.

(Well, that was a lie... but... my 'superpower' is about to expire anyway.)

And the group turned lively once again... well... all but one. Saya still looked extra grumpy. Her arms folded and her head turned towards the window that was next to her...

(I'll take my two cookies and say that the reason she is like this, is because of the gun thing... well... let's see...)

I walk up to Saya as she kept staring outside... up to the point... that i was actually next to her.

"Why so glum?" I ask. Saya jerks her shoulders and darts her head to me... and just... stares.

(Wow, she's really out of it...)

"... It's nothing..." She responds as she turns her head back towards the window.

I just fold my arms and keep staring at her... Saya glanced at me a couple of times... until she let out a sigh.

"I... hate feeling useless." She finally speaks up in a low tone as she draws her Luger.

"The only time i used this, i could not even shoot correctly... and if i'll have to shoot a second time... I know i won't do any better!" She raises her voice as she turns to me.

"Y... you said to Saeko, that if she needed help with her gun, she could come to you. W... well i also need help with my gun!... Or was your offer only aimed towards her?" She extends her arm towards me and 'shows' me the gun.

(Called it)

"I'm pretty sure i said me... or Kohta... but... uhh... can i look at the gun for a bit? " I ask as i point at the Luger... Saya blinks a few times before she reluctantly hands it over.

"I'm going to kill you if you break it" She says as she keeps staring at the handgun... i didn't respond... i just 'aimed' the gun as i placed its stock against my shoulder.

(Hmm... while the gun's detachable stock does make it easier to aim... it still is a bit... weird to handle...)

I then take off the drum magazine as i keep the gun aimed... all the while, Saya just stared at me.

(... The drum also seems to add some noticeable weight... wonder if it's full or not... that should be... thirty-two rounds?... In either case... i think Kohta's decision was the right one.

While the luger is about... what?... Less than a kilo with no mag inside? And the Mp5 can be between two to three depending on the model, it's still wielded with both hands... so it should be easier to handle. I should also check its sight... even with the dot dead... it might be able to still act as a zooming lens... the silencer should also make the gun more 'forgiving'... As for the recoil, can't really tell. but both guns use the same ammo type so...)

"Hey what are y..."

"Kohta... the MP5 we have uses 9mm's?" I ask as i turn to him... he looks at me and nods.

"I think Saya should have it, her luger ain't exactly... easy to use... The MP5 can be used with both hands, and as it uses the same type of ammo, the recoil can't be that much worse" I start walking towards him before giving Saya one last glance... and she... was looking anywhere but here.

"Well... yea... but i gave the Ar-10 to Asami, we don't have any other long-range weapons left, as the M1A1 is used by Rei" He answers as he turns to look at Asami.

(... Yea that... has been bothering me for some time now... and... while i'm NOT going to ask why Rei is using a frigging long-range gun as a stabbing pole... i really should keep it in the 'why the crap?' section. Especially now that we have a person that can use it as a for what it really is... a frigging gun)

"AAA... K... Kohta... y... you can have the gun. A... Asami feels anxious just holding a gun like this. she's... used to her handgun..." Asami runs up to Kohta and extends the rifle to him...

"... But... i wanted us to snipe together..." I hear him respond in a low tone as he keeps looking at her...

"A... Asami... likes it more when you use this gun... it makes you look... cool"... Less than two seconds later... i was holding the MP5 along with its sling...

Asami breathed a sigh of relief the moment the gun got off her hands. she then turned to me and nodded with a smile, before turning back to Kohta.

(Or... we don't have a person that can use Rei's gun. Asami... knows how to get what she wants... or in this matter... how to get rid of what she doesn't...)

With that... i walk back to Saya and hand her both the MP5 and the Luger.

"It's heavier, but should be easier to use... the sight might be dead, but check if it can act as a zoom lens... it uses the same ammo type as the Luger, so you can actually change bullets from one gun to another... now the thing has a suppressor... but don't expect the gun to be muted, it doesn't work like that. It will still sound like a dinner bell for the corpses... and uhh... that about it... i think..." I fold my arms as i speak. Saya just kept looking at new the gun... and then... i take a couple of steps back...

(Just in case mister 'wild slap' appears... not for me though... if Saya slaps my mask, she will blame me for her aching hand later...)

"I'll show you some of the technical stuff, once we're not running around" As i finish, i turn around and look the group... Takashi nods, and starts talking. While i walked towards the exit. I stopped by the door's frame and looked outside...

(Well... that went... fine)

Behind me, i could hear Takashi talking about our plan. which was going to where Rei lived to find her mother before heading towards the school... and then, i felt a hand on my shoulder.

"... These... technical stuff you mentioned... can i expect, that it'll be you that'll show them to me?"... Turning around, i see Saeko looking at me.

"And... i also never used a gun before. The lesson... i would rather it be with one teacher... and one student." Saeko kept her eyes locked to my face... and even with my mask on... i could honestly feel her staring at me... i... just nodded. Not much else i could do in this situation to be honest... as she already knows how i feel about Saya... and her wording was... way too precise.

"AAAHH !WHOA WHOA!" And Takashi starts shouting... i turn around to see him flailing his leg as Zeke was with one leg lifted in the air right under him... and the group then bursts into laughter...

"Oh man... that was lame..." Takashi groans...

"So... back into the car and on to Rei's neighborhood?" I ask while the group was getting back its bearings.

"Yea..." Takashi responds.

"My house... is actually not very far from here, with the car it should be less than five minutes away" Rei adds right after him. With that, we start heading towards the exit...

"Ohh... one more thing Takashi..." He turns around to look at me as i call his name...

"You ain't getting into the car with them smelly pants..." I fold my arms as i speak.

"Bad Zeke! Now Takashi will have to run behind the car!" Alice 'scolds' the dog... who... uhh... just started liking her pointed finger...

"Yep, you're not getting inside the car if you'll make it stink, it has horrible ventilation!" Saya adds up right after.

"Uhh... we... have extra pants, i'll just change into one of them" Takashi responds.

(We?... You mean the clothes 'i' gathered in the estate... huh)

And so, we headed back towards the car. Thankfully, with no trouble following us. Once there, we took off the net, unlocked the trunk and got inside... well, more like Alice went inside and unlocked the hatch for the rest of us... as Shizuka... could barely fit through the trunk with how tight of a squeeze it was because of her... assets... then all of us got in... well, all of us but Takashi... for him... i just grabbed a pair of black trousers that i didn't have any side pockets and tossed them towards him... i wasn't about to give him the best pants i had, thank you very much...

(Wish i had a pair of pink spandex to give him)

I found my self chuckling as Takashi closed the trunk in order to change.

"... What's so funny?" Saya, who was sitting next to me, asked.

"Nothing..." I respond, She narrows her eyes, frowns, folds her arms... and keeps staring.

The reason Saya was on the back, was because Rei was in the front seat now, that way she could show Shizuka where to go...

(I'm actually surprised that Saya's willing to sit on the center of the Humvee... seeing as it has no seats)

"Uhh. What do i do with the old pants?" I hear Takashi ask as his head pops through the hatch.

"Throw them... the whole reason you changed was so they would not end up inside the car to begin with" Saya turns to look at Takashi as she speaks, he nods and tosses the pants behind the car. He then climbs inside and sits next to Saeko, who was next to Saya... Kohta and Asami were in there usual... 'spot'... that being the leg section on Takashi's seat. Alice was in the front on Rei's lap.

And like that, Shizuka turned on the car and drove off while following Rei's directions...

"By the way... how are we going on fuel?" I ask as i look behind me at the jerry cans.

"Umm... the car was refueled in the estate... i have yet to refill it... and the fuel indicator has moved to about the... uhh... third-fifth?" Shizuka answers.

(Hmm... if i remember correctly... a Humvee needed like five, twenty-liter jerry cans to fill up... and the miles it could go depended a lot on how heavy it was, from two miles... all the way up to twelve.

Now, ours is not 'armed'... but i don't know if the armor plating it has is 'standard' for a humvee...)

As i turn around, i notice that Saeko was staring at the open hatch...

"The weather doesn't look too friendly" She speaks up as she keeps looking through the hatch.

"Well we're in the car... we should be fine" Takashi responds.

"Won't we have to exit after we reach our destination though... or... you intend to cannonball the car through the buildings " I tilt my head as i turn to him.

"Pfft..." Saya puts her hand over her mouth as she lowers her head and leans forward.

"Uhh... actually i don't think this car will even fit on the streets we need to take... Takashi, the roads around my house are too narrow... don't you remember that?" Rei turns around from the front seat to look at Takashi as she speaks.

"Uhh... oh... right..." He trails off as he nods...

(... wait... what?... Ohh shit... that ain't good)

"There should be a convenience store on the road ahead. Before it starts getting too narrow... we can park the car there. It has a small alleyway next to it, it worked the first time around... so it should work here too... right?" Rei then turns to me as she asks.

(... What's with everybody turning to me for this crap, I ain't the frigging here leader dammit...)

"Got to see the place first" I answer, Rei nods and turns to look ahead.

And... she was right. It didn't take us too long to actually reach the convenience store after that. We really weren't that far, guess Rei's

father had that fabled, work being close to home thing.

"It's here, see" Rei then points at the left part of the street, towards a store that was not too far from us... the store itself was not that tall... about one and a half floors, to its left, an alleyway and next to that alleyway a two-story building... and that's about it... i could not see anything else around to use for cover. As most if not all the buildings around here were apartments.

"Can't see any better cover... uhh... Shizuka..see if you can park the car in reverse, better if we're able to leave fast in case of an emergency... and you know, engine off. Though, parking there in reverse with the engine off might be a bit... impossible... just do what you can " As i speak Shizuka nods and tries to do as i asked.

I then climbed up the hatch until i was completely out and looked around as Shizuka tried to park the car. Luckily... the alleyway was wide enough to fit the Humvee... and... i could actually see what seemed to be another alleyway behind the building... but... well... plainly put, the car was way too fat, it couldn't go back there... now this alleyway was not that long... about the same distance as the store... which must have been... two, two and a half Humvees at maximum... in other words...

"... We're still too exposed... uhh. Let's make sure nothing is trying to creep up on us... then go inside the building... we'll think of a plan in there" I say as i look back into the hatch. The group glanced at each other before Takashi nodded at me.

After the rest exited the vehicle and Shizuka locked it. We went to the front part of the store.

"We attracted some attention... hmm... well, not all that surprising, we're in a residential area after all" There must have been a total of... fifteen corpses? Coming from several directions.

"Where do we go from here?" I ask as i turn to Rei.

"Umm... this way" She points to our left, I nod and turn to run towards the right. Pulling the bokken out of the side straps as i head straight towards a stop sign that was a little further off, on the opposite side of the road.

I switch my hold on the wooden blade to a reverse grip, pull my arm back, and then take a strong swing at the sign it self... to the point that i actually felt the vibration all the way to up my shoulder...

I dart my head around, shake my arm, and move back towards the rest.

The corpses on the 'left side' were not past the group yet... but i could see them moving towards the upper part of the street now...

(They changed direction... good)

After i got back to the group... we just... went back into the alleyway... and watched as the corpses waltzed past us and headed straight towards the sign.

"Is it a good idea to leave them there?... What if we make noise inside the building?... They're way too close" Saya asks in a low tone as she looks at me, occasionally glancing at the corpses...

"Not much else we can do... shooting them will cause more to come, dynamite will get a horde on our face... going close... is too risky with all of them jumbled together like that" I respond.

"Let's see if we can go inside first" Takashi starts walking towards the road as he motions us to follow him.

We turned left and then headed straight to the store's front door... which... was wide open.

The insides also looked, rather untouched and we had a good view too, as the front wall was made of glass that was still intact... a bit weird if you consider that this place has water and non-perishables...

even if most of em are in the junk food category... also, i couldn't see any blood or any signs of struggle.

We go inside, close the door behind us and take a better look around.

Most of the building was pretty much a giant room with two big rows of shelves, both filled with items on both sides. All that was in the center and to my right. In the wall ahead, three large 'wall' fridges that still had unopened bottles inside, to my left was a counter with the register and behind it, a metal door, in the store's left wall... to my right, a thick tinted glass wall that led to what i think was a storage room. Next to it, a door with a toilet sign over it. There was also a narrow corridor straight ahead and to my left, that ended with a rather sturdy looking metal door...

"Hmm... this place has waterproof clothing?" I ask.

"Uhh... it's a convenience store you idiot, why would it have clothes?" Saya groans as she turns her head to me.

"... Don't we need waterproof clothing...?" I ask again as i turn to her.

"Ahh... there should be a clothing store next door, to the left... we can go and look there" Rei speaks up.

"Ok... we'll split in half then. Some people will search this place... while the others will go and get some waterproof clothes" Takashi turns towards the group as he speaks.

"I'm going to the clothes store" I raise my hand before anybody else could speak.

"Huh... why do 'you' want to go?" Saya asks as she folds her arms.

"I'd like to buy my own clothes... lest i end up with a pink hoodie... or a jacket with a dog face or something" I respond.

"But... dog hoodies are awesome..." Alice lowers her head slightly as she whines.

"And who would do something so childish anyway?" Saya asks again.

(Other than me?... To be honest... i can totally see you doing it... no way i'm telling her that though)

"Just to be sure" I respond.

"Ok... then..."

"I will go too" Saeko cuts Takashi off.

"Me too" Saya adds shortly after.

"I want to pick something for my self too..." Rei was the next one to speak.

"I..."

"Ok... no more, or we'll all end up going there" Takashi cuts Shizuka off... who instantly pouts and looks away...

With that, me and the three girls headed out and went... to the store next door... like... literally next door. And said door, was also wide open.

We went inside to find the place empty... and untouched. Again, one big room with a couple of wide, short benches on the center. Several rows of clothes that extended from the wall to my right and headed towards the wall to the left, with all rows stopping a little before the center of the store. A lot of clothes were also hanging to my left and the register was also in the far off corner on the left. Straight ahead, were a couple of full-body sided mirrors hanging on the wall. Also, said wall didn't go all way, stopping at about... three fourths in distance from the wall to the right? And behind it, was another room

with even more clothes hanging in rows... also... here... was where i found what i was going to...'buy'.

"Ok... let's get what we need... along with some extras for the others so they can choose... that way they can't say that we didn't give em a choice." As i say that the girls nod and spread out... I?...

I went straight to the back... on waterproof trench coat section and... uh... to put it plainly. World war two, German officer trenchcoat... the only difference, was that the collar ended with a hood. Other than that... it looked exactly the same, lapels, buttons, length, everything... also... it was obviously black. It's a shame that its looks might remind some people of the atrocities committed in that era... but... i want the trenchcoat... because i like the trenchcoat, i couldn't care less about that ideology... also, it seemed less... heavy... i suspect that was because it wasn't leather. The fabric was still rather thick though.

I take off my glove and feel the outer texture...

(... Guess it's the same material as the coat that Saeko wore in the manga?... hmm...)

I take off my bag, sling and jacket. Then fasten the sling back on me and wear the trench coat. I also pull the hood up before turning to look towards the mirror to my right.

(... I might not be able to jump over fences with this... but hell i look like a badass... the hood might not be 'big', but it still covers the mask if looking from the side.

Ok... bought, done with mine. Let's get some stuff for the others now... i remember that Takashi, for some reason, didn't wear anything to cover his pants... hmm... ehh whatever, I'll just get a bunch of waterproof jackets and ponchos.)

I leave the trenchcoat unbuttoned, take my jacket along with some more waterproof jackets, fold them and shove them in my bag before

throwing it over my shoulder.

(Ok... let's go...)

I give the mirror one last glance and then walk back to the front room. Where the girls were trying out different waterproof clothes... and holy crap... i know i didn't take long... so why there were so many ponchos tossed on the floor...

"Saeko, are you sure you want to wear that?... You'll have to carry around an umbrella as it has no hood and you don't want to wear a hat." Rei looks at Saeko as she speaks, who was already in her own... coat. The same coat she wore in the manga, black with a purple hue in color, two rows of buttons, a belt that was tied to a ribbon around her waist, under that, the coat had four equal cuts on the sides that made it separate into four segments. Forth, back, and sides.

"I already have one" Saeko replies as she opens the Japanese style umbrella she was holding, a deep purple in color from what i could see.

"Hey opening an umbrella inside a building is bad luck you know..." Rei folds her arms as she stares at Saeko, all the while in her own camo poncho.

"Heh... it's almost as if you're trying to... impress... somebody" Saya's eye twitched slightly as she spoke with a forced grin. She was wearing... a bright yellow raincoat, that one didn't have a hood either, so she was also wearing a bright yellow hat.

"Is it that weird, that i want to be presentable?" Saeko closes her eyes and smiles as she folds the umbrella.

"A... anyway, that should be all... let's get ready to return?" Rei asks.

"Y... yea... I'll go get Naier... so much about girls taking too long to dress up. He's taking longer than u..." Saya shakes her head and

turns to walk towards my direction... only to end up face to face
err... mask with me.

"So we done?" I ask.

"... Y... yea..." Saya responds as she keeps staring at me... her
mouth slightly open.

"... You... look like a supervillain now" Rei also ended up staring at
me as she kept blinking...

"... Uhh... isn't an overlord in the supervillain category to begin
with?" I tilt my head as i ask.

"I think it suits you... perfectly" Saeko... while she spoke in a normal
tone with a slight smile... was also staring.

(Ok... this is getting awkward...)

"So... we're... done?... or..."

"Y... yea, let's go" Saya was the first one to 'wake up'. She instantly
turned around as she grabbed the tip of her hat and lowered it.

"... Yea... the others... are waiting" Rei was the second one to speak
as she started to pick the extra ponchos.

Saeko... just turned to help the other two while giving me an
occasional glance.

"You want me to hel..."

"N... no, we can handle it" Saya cuts me off, her back still turned to
me... it almost felt like she was... hiding.

And like that, the girls gathered everything and we headed back to
the store where the others were waiting. After entering and closing
the door behind us.

"We're back." Rei speaks up.

"Ahh welcome back, did you find wha..." And... Takashi freezes... i don't know if he was looking at me... or Saeko... as she was standing next to me... again...

"Bark!" And... a wild Zeke appeared... who with a jump, latched on to my sleeve. I lift my arm to head high and turn my hand until Zeke and i were eye to eye... he... just started wagging his tail as he looked at me.

"Really now minion?" I start poking the dog in its belly until it finally let go of me... He landed next to my boot and then instantly ran back to Alice.

"So... are we going to keep staring at each other?... Or is there anything worthy of mention in this place?" I ask as i turn to Takashi. He shakes his head and then nods.

"Uhh..yea... we found that the shutters in this place can be lowered manually... don't know how noisy that'll get though, so we didn't try to lower them... then the door behind the counter leads to a small room with a computer, a couple of lockers and a cabinet... the computer doesn't work... and" He then turns towards the corridor to the left, the one with the door at the end.

"This door leads to the back alleyway, we can go straight to the car from there... and next to the door, there's a staircase that leads to a giant room that i think was used as storage space, it had a couple of boxes scattered around, but otherwise, it was empty... and dark... there were only a couple of very small windows on one of the walls... and that's about it." He points at the corridor as he speaks before turning back to look at me... and... before i could even answer...

"You brought anything for us to chose?" Shizuka skips past Takashi and looks at us. She folds her arms until they touched her shoulders and bends her knees slightly...

"Uhh yea... i have some in there, the girls have the rest" I toss my bag to her as i speak. She nods as she catches it, then runs up to the girls... and after that... well, we sort of took a small break.

The place was not looted so it had a buttload of food and water... let's just say... i haven't eaten so much junk food in my whole life combined... but hey, better than eating nothing... also apparently... i'm the only person in here that likes sour stuff... as the group looked at me like i was some sort of alien when i decided to eat some vinegar chips...

And so, after Kohta had his... uhh... event... with the condoms... Which, fun fact... i still don't know why Shizuka took them off the counter and started walking around with them in her hand... also another fun fact... Asami did not seem TOO mad about the whole thing. Shizuka then, after we found the net launcher under the counter had her own weird-ass fantasy on how it works... and then, the rest then got dressed for the rain, as it did start raining.

"Alright... so we're ready to go?" Takashi asks as he takes a sip out of the bottled water in his hand, the group responds with a nod.

(... Actually... we're not... leaving the fact that i don't know how this will go after getting Rei's mother. The Humvee is way too exposed... and... the sky is beginning to turn orange... i got no idea how far that school is at... or how long it'll take to find Rei's mom

I know that i always say that Takashi is the leader here... but... i don't like this... i guess... it's time for a temporary... override)

"I don't think all of us should go" I speak up as the group starts to move... they all stop and turn to me.

"Is something bothering you?" Saeko asks as she looks at me.

"Yes, two things. One... is that the Humvee is way too exposed, even if we cover it, the alleyway is too short, way too easy to spot..." I say as i fold my arms.

"And second... We're about to go into your neighborhood... Can you really kill the corpses in there?" I turn to Rei and Takashi as i speak.

"Are you telling us to stay behind? If it came down to it i think we..."

"Actually i'm not telling you to stay behind, i'm preparing you... because you two 'must' go" I cut off Takashi, causing him to freeze.

"... Wha... first you tell us that we might have to kill our relatives if we go... then you tell us that we MUST go? Do you know how this even sounds right now?" Rei glares at me as she folds her arms.

"Yes, i do... but we don't know how your relatives look... and we don't know the area... so, you're the only ones who can... confirm" I respond... and both turn to look at the ground.

"So you two... must go... for better or for worst... that also means that somebody who can fight for more than one person must go" I turn to look at Saeko as i speak, She nods without even blinking. I then to Kohta... who also nods with a serious expression.

"And you are..."

"I'll stay with the Humvee... i'm the only one left among the ones that can go into close range in a fight... Shizuka, Alice, you two also stay" I cut off Takashi as i look at the two girls... i expected Shizuka to start pouting or something... but... she just nodded with a serious expression as she shoved Alice under her chest.

"And what about me?" Saya asks as she stared at me...

(Right... careful wording here...)

"... Saya, Asami... you two can decide whether you want to go or stay, you will be useful both here and there.

"I will go" Asami walks up to Kohta as she speaks.

"... I... guess i'll stay then" Saya responds right after.

"Alright, so we're ready to..."

"No" I cut Takashi off again... causing the group to turn towards me once more.

"Two more things..." I go to my bag, open it... and take out the walkie talkies. Then toss one to Takashi.

"Huh... but... these don't reach very far" He tilts his head as he speaks.

"Open it" I turn on mine as i speak... Takashi nods and does so.

I press on the talk button, the moment i do, the other walkie made a small 'click' sound. I let go of the talk button and then press it two times, the click sound then got heard two times...

"That clicking sound can still be heard even when the radios give off nothing but static, we can use that" I respond as i wave the radio in my hand.

"Uhh... and... how do we?..."

"A way to let others know if there is trouble or not... hmm... One-click represents 'all fine', Two clicks means 'Alert', Three clicks will stand for... 'we need back up'... four... will count as... 'Do not come looking for us'... and five... will count as 'Reset'... or cancel"... The group ended up going silent moment i mentioned the 'fourth' click...

"... Do we... need a fourth click..." Shizuka asks as she glances at the group, before turning to look at me.

"Yes... we do" I respond.

"But that obviously doesn't mean that we should strive to use it... we never did... let's keep it that way" I add up... Shizuka looks at the ground before lifting her head to look at me again, she closes her eyes and nods with a smile.

"And one last thing... as these will produce static noise when pressing the talk button... make quick clicks only... the more you have the talk button pressed, the more you endanger the other group... and... uhh... keep the fact that we have a working car under the carpet at all times... as the person you're speaking to, might not be the only one that's actually listening" Takashi nods as he looks at the walkie talkie.

"Any questions?" I ask...

"Uhh... just one..." Takashi turns to look at me...

"Why aren't you the leader again?..." He asks he raises an eyebrow and scratches the back of his head with a slight grin.

"Easy. I'm an overlord, i work behind the lines" I respond as i shrug.

"Supervillain" Rei says with a slight grin.

"Ninja penguin" Shizuka adds up right after.

(... My... 'Titles' keep pilling up ehh...)

I just lower my head and shake it before turning to look back at Takashi.

"Oh and... i think we need to lower the shutters... that wall won't last two seconds if somebody... or something... decides that it wants in" I point at the glass wall as i speak.

"Uhh... yea... there's a crank handle inside the room that's behind the counter with the register..." Takashi nods as he points at the metal door.

(Hmm... alright... the rain should mask some of the sound... so it should be fine to lower them)

I nod to my self as i think...

"Well... that's all..." As i say that, the group nods and starts moving again. With me, Saya, Shizuka and Alice staying in place.

"Oh... Naier, As you'll need to lower the shutters from the outside. If you're going to go out with the Benelli... you might want to use a condom..." Kohta speaks up as he points at the small box on the counter.

"K... Kohta!... Wording!" Shizuka, while her lips were still curved up to a smile, is left with her mouth wide open as she starts blushing... and then covers Alice's ears.

"T... that's it! I'm going to kill you fatso!" Saya's face was even redder than Shizuka's as she 'lifted' her sleeve and stomped towards Kohta.

"Huh?!... B..but i explained why we..." Kohta puts his hands in front of him as he starts backing off.

"I don't care! I'm going to strangle you!"... And... Saya ended up chasing Kohta around the store... I don't think i've ever seen her face being so... red...

"Let's... lower the shutters... all of them... you'll use the back exit..." I keep looking at Saya as i speak...

"Uhh... yea..." Takashi responds as he also keeps looking at the duo...

No more hand-holding pt 2

"After we've searched the surrounding area we'll return. So keep the path to this door secured, or we won't be able to get back inside" Takashi turns around to glance at the alleyway that was through the door he just mentioned.

"Yea... as we can't... use the front entrance anymore..." Rei adds up while looking behind me, towards the main room.

And... she wasn't wrong. After Saya's little... outburst... we barely managed to close the shutters before the store's front sidewalk became a corpse hangout.

"Well... we could draw them away as we leave." Kohta lifts the AR-10 in his arms slightly as he speaks.

"No, it's alright. That metal shutter should be more than enough to hold them back. Plus with Them there, we deter any unwanted visitors who actually 'know' how to get rid of the shutter... and... trying to draw them away, will just block off your own escape route." I respond as i shake my head.

"Yea... that's true... so, well, in that case, we're off... we will use the radios if need be" Takashi nods, turns around and motions the rest to follow him. Them being Saeko, Rei, Kohta and Asami.

"Ohh, and, see if you can barricade the alleyway where we parked the car, we'll handle the other side" Takashi turns around and points to my left before looking at me.

"Already on it" I nod, give Saeko one last glance and close the door, then head inside the store, where the rest of the group was at. In other words, Saya, Alice, and Shizuka.

"Hmm, seems they finally pipped down completely" I say in a low tone as i walk into the room and look at the corpses on the other side

of the metal grill shutter.

"Yep... wonder if the rain made them lose interest... they don't seem to want to move though... but at least they also don't seem to be able hear us..." Shizuka, who was sitting on the counter, puts her finger under her chin and tilts her head as she keeps looking at the corpses.

"Rain is falling all around them... but the sound is probably not concentrated enough to make them move... add that they might also be drawn to each other's moaning..." Saya answers as she keeps leaning her back against a shelf, her arms folded under her chest and a slight frown on her face...

"So leaving them there is the best we can do?" Shizuka asks.

"They didn't manage to get through the shutter even when they tried... and going out to bait them, isn't without its own risks... seems unnecessary... for now at least" I respond as I turn to glance at my bag that was hanging on the side of the furthest row of shelves, the same row that Saya was leaning on.

"Ughh... if only that idiot Kohta had kept his stupid little mouth shut..." Saya keeps looking at the corpses as she groans.

"But... Saya... are condoms really that bad?" Alice, who was sitting on the counter, next to Shizuka... speaks up... and Saya ends up freezing as she locks her head to her... I mean... she even stopped blinking...

"Please don't shout..." I turn to look at Saya as I speak, she darts her head to me and narrows her eyes... but stays otherwise quiet.

"A... Alice, as Kohta mentioned... t... they're meant for... adults" Saya then turns to look at Alice again.

"... Yes... Kohta did tell me that... but, what are they used for?... You're a genius Saya... so you must know, right?" Alice, ever

oblivious, asks again as she tilts her head and stares at Saya with big, round eyes...

(Holy crap, Alice throws some hardcore side jabs... and she doesn't even realize it)

"Ahh... well...uhh... i... uhh... well... I'm a genius... o... of course i... do know... but... you're too young... s... so I'm not telling you until you get older" Saya started glancing around the room as she spoke. Until she finally looked back at Alice, right before she finished her sentence.

"Huh... but whyyy..." Alice jumps off the counter hops over to Saya.

"As i told you munchkin, you're too young, that the end of it. I'm not telling you" Saya responds with a stern voice as she narrows her eyes.

"Ouuuuuh... hmm... ohh, Shizuka, Shizuka..." Alice turns around towards the nurse as she starts speaking... only to find the woman whistling... and staring at the ceiling... Alice pouts and folds her arms... and then turns towards the last person she had yet to ask...

"That's a question that girls answer to girls. And boys answer to boys... that's a rule that even overlords have to follow, can't help you here shorty" I cut her off before she could even speak up...

"Muuu... you're all just a bunch of big meanies" Alice, lowers her head and looks at her feet as she keeps pouting...

I shake my head, chuckle, and walk up to Shizuka.

"So... Shizuka. Once you're done looking for the spider pig... could you give me the Humvee keys?" I stop next to her as also turn to glance at the ceiling before looking back at her.

"Umm, oh sure... ehheh... spider... pig?" She fiddles inside the pockets of the jacket she was wearing before pulling them out and

tossing them to me.

(When did she even change into that?...)

"Huh, what do you want the Humvee keys for?" Saya asks while still leaning on the shelf.

"Takashi asked me to block the alleyway that the car is parked in. So, before i go ripping off doors to use as barricades, i want to see if i can steer the car a little more to the side in order to block a bigger part of the alleyway... I need the keys to get inside the car and lower the hand break" I replied.

"... You... can rip off doors?" Shizuka ask she keeps looking at me, her eyes slightly wide.

"The door to the room that's behind the counter and the door after the stairs that go to the second floor, they're both made of metal, so they should be pretty sturdy... and uhh... no actual ripping... just need to unscrew the door hinges with a screw driver" I answer.

"And... we do... have a screwdriver?" Saya turns to me and asks... with a slight smirk. And then... silence...

(Uhh... the one i had... got 'confiscated'... when i got 'arrested' by Saya's mom... After that, i ended up with a combat knife... i could use that... but it might dull the edge... ughh... well i could...)

"Heh, i'll take the silence as a no... well, lucky for you i picked up a couple of different types when we were in the estate... though we might need em... looks like i was right" Saya then speaks up again, the grin still on her face...

(Ohooh. Saya wants a head pat?)

"Hmm... good thinking Saya... ok, i shouldn't waste any more time, i'll go to the car and see if i can use it to block the alleyway... without actually jamming it between the walls..." I nod... turn around... and

head towards the back door. Right before i exit the building, i look at the shotgun that was still on me.

(... I'm just going to keep it hidden under the coat... i... had enough condom related chats for today)

And so, i walk out the back door and go left, then, once i reached the end of the alleyway, i turn left again and come face to trunk with the Humvee that was a little further off. Also, while there were no corpses in the alleyway... i could still see a couple of them on the road that was partly visible from here... none of them seemed to be interested in heading towards the car though.

(Damn, the sky is really coming down right now... let's get this over with before i end up with a permanent water attribute...)

I walk over to the Humvee, unlock the driver's door, lean inside and push down the handbrake as i turn the steering wheel to the left. I then exit the vehicle, close the door and go behind it.

(... I just hope i can actually push this thing... hmm... well, we're on a flat surface and the tires are fine... so i suppose it shouldn't be that hard)

I nod and then start pushing the car from behind... and slowly, step by step, the Humvee begins rolling towards the wall to the left. Though that meant that the gap in the right was getting bigger now.

I look to my right as i keep pushing.

(Hmm... the way the car is going to be positioned now... it seems to make a 'cone' shape with the wall to the right... i could use a door and 'jam' it between the car the wall)

After i felt the car bump against what i guess was the left wall i back off from the trunk and go to the right side of the vehicle.

(Well, the front part of the car is pretty far apart from the wall... a horizontally placed door would definitely fit in... so i can just place it there and push it until it gets lodged... hmm yea... plus getting rid of it is as easy as kicking it from the opposite side... and... i don't think corpses have the mental capacity to actually realize that they need to pull the door. If they somehow manage to get here that is)

I nod to my self and go over to the left side of the car. After pulling the handbrake up, i lock the driver's door. I was the about to turn around when i heard an... annoyed moan?... groan?... coming from behind me.

Turning around i find... Saya... her back turned to me... dragging a... door?

(Uhh... what exactly am i looking at?...)

I start walking towards her.

"Come on you stupid door, ughhh... Why is this so god damn h..." It... must have taken less than a second... Saya's hands... slipped, probably because of the rain. She then took a couple of steps backward as she flailed her arms... and landed on her butt... to my surprise... all of that... happened in pure silence, as she didn't shout and the door landed on top of her... so that 'splat' was even more... audible...

(Does this count as the ground slapping Saya's butt?... uhh... the fuck am i even thinking?)

"Ughhh Stupid... door..." She starts raising her voice... but quickly lowers it as she fixes her hat and gets up.

"Are you alright?... And... can i ask what exactly you're doing?" I ask as i walk up to her.

"Y... you said you needed a door... Or did you just make me do all this for no reason?" She glanced at me before lifting one side of the

door again.

"No, and you're actually just on time, i was about to return in order to get a door" I walk past her and lift the door from the other side.

"We need to get this to the right side of the car. We'll use it to block the opening" I say as i look at Saya, she just glanced behind her and nodded.

We then headed to the right side of the car and placed the door horizontally between the car and the wall. After that, we pushed until it got 'stuck'.

"That should do it" I take a step back and look at the 'barricade'

(The door is past the passenger's seat, so we can use that to go to the other side)

I go to the door and unlock it.

"Uhh... on second thought, going inside like this... we'll probably end up turning the insides into an aquarium" I lock the door again and up climb on the car's hood. Then turn around, kneel down and extend my hand to Saya.

"I... can get up my self. I only fell back there because..." She starts trying to climb up the hood from the side as she speaks... with... uhh... little success.

"Go to the front part of the car and place your foot in one of the holes that are in the car's lower frame, right under the hood, use it as a step to climb up" I respond as i lower my hand.

"I... i know you idiot... you don't have to tell me" Saya responds as she lowers her head slightly and goes to the front part of the hood... and finally climbs up... albeit rather... clumsily.

"Well the left side of the hood is too close to the wall, we'll go back down from the backside of the car" I respond as i get on the roof and

glance behind me. Saya follows me with a slight frown... though judging from her red face... i'd say she was probably embarrassed... rather than annoyed.

"... Hmm... you can try to slide down the trunk... though that will..." I turn to Saya as i speak... only to see that she now did indeed look quite... annoyed...

"Well, i'm sorry i'm not a badass acrobat like Saeko..." She responds as she folds her arms and looks away, the frown still on her face.

(... Oh... boy... she just said that didn't she?)

"What does Saeko have to do with any of this?" I 'ask'.

"... Nothing..." She responds as she keeps looking away.

(... Uhh... hmm... ohhh... idea)

I jump down the car, causing Saya to turn to me.

"H... hey where are you..." Before she could finish i unlock the back door and get inside, leaving the door slightly open and hanging my trenchcoat on it.

I then open the hatch and motion Saya to come down.

" I... i told you, i don't need your..."

"You got the MP5 with you?" I cut her off...

"Uhh yes?" She answers.

"Well then, come down here before the car's insides get drenched" I turn to look at the trenchcoat as i speak. Saya grumbles slightly and finally climbs down.

"Ok, now take off the raincoat" I say the moment Saya got down and closed the hatch.

"... W... what?..." She just... stared at me with a blank expression...

(Well... that did sound a bit... weird)

"It's dripping water all over the car, we'll be swimming by the time i'm done showing you how to use the MP5 if you don't take it off." I point at her raincoat as i speak.

"Wait?... Here?... Now?" She just kept staring at me.

"Yea, though if you keep this up, the only thing i'll be doing is mopping the Humvee" I respond.

"... R... right..." Saya nods and sits down as she takes off the raincoat... and is then left in her suspender sort shorts, 'HQ' T-shirt and the black long-sleeved shirt she was wearing under that.

I motion her to give me the raincoat, which she does. I then hang it on the door, next to my own coat.

"Ok... so... can i see the gun for starters?" I ask as i turn back and sit next to her. Saya nods, takes the gun off the sling and hands it to me.

I press on the magazine release button that was behind the mag, remove it and leave it next to me. Then grab the cocking handle and pull it back and up, locking the bolt carrier on the backside of the receiver as a bullet went flying out the ejection port. I pick the stray bullet and leave it next to me. Then pick up the magazine and start unloading the bullets.

After both the gun and magazine were empty i put the magazine back inside the gun grab the cocking handle and slide it back in the front part of the gun before letting it go.

"Ok... let's start with the easy stuff... take off the magazine, and then put it back in" I hand the gun to Saya as i speak... she nods and

does as i asked.... The moment she locked the magazine back into the MP5, she turned to look at me.

"Ok... now do it a couple more times, you'll need to be able to do this without looking" I point at the mag as i speak.

"... Without... looking?" She responds as she glances at the gun and frowns slightly.

"Yes, you need your eyes to look at the thing that's trying to rip you apart" I answer.

"Taking the magazine off is actually pretty easy, lift your trigger finger and place it on the trigger guard that is behind the magazine release button... switch... whatever you want to call it" She nods as i speak.

"Then use your other hand to press the button, it will be a little further off from your finger, so it should be easy to find " She nods and starts moving her hand as she glances at the gun, lowering her head slightly. And a couple of seconds later, she was holding the mag in her other hand.

"Placing it back in, is the same deal, use your trigger finger to 'feel' where exactly the gun is at. Then bring the magazine a little further forward from there... also, use your thumb and, or index finger to feel the gun, so you'll know when you've found the correct spot... and just to make sure, give it a strong push after you placed it inside... you should hear a 'click' after the mag gets locked in, also, hold the mag in a way so that the 'curve' looks away from you" Saya kept staring at me, while occasionally nodding... no whining, no grumbling, no frowning... she was actually taking this pretty seriously.

... She then spent the next couple of minutes trying to 'blind' reload the gun.

(So... next..uhh... next... how to use the sights... the safety... the scope... hmm... shoulder placement... hmm

I could also show her how to load bullets in the magazine and how to deal with a jam... but... not today, showing her everything now will just overload her... genius or not)

"Ok... i think i got the hang of this" Saya speaks up as she turns to look at me... and then starts reloading the gun while still looking at me... i think she was grinning slightly...

(Oh... she's fast... well, the whole deal is doing this under pressure... but still, not bad)

"Hmm..good. Just remember, if you change an empty magazine... or more correctly, if the chamber has no bullet inside, you'll also have to pull this handle all the way to the back and then let it bolt forward by itself... Because if i remember correctly, this gun doesn't lock the carrier on the back after the last round" I point at the receiver and then at the cocking handle as i speak. Saya just looks at my finger and nods.

"Next... try aiming the gun out the front windshield, at a corpse in the distance" I point to my left as i speak... Saya looks at me for a bit before nodding again. She lifts the MP5 and 'aims' it.

(she has the stock on her shoulder, but did not place her cheek on it, which i think is possible with this certain stock..)

"... The sight's not working..." She says as she keeps aiming the gun.

"... Right, look under the dot sight, the iron sights should be there. Try looking through them and tell me if your target looks 'further away' " I point at the guns actual sights as i speak. Saya nods and lowers her head slightly...

"Umm... yea... it does seem further away... i guess the scope can act like a mini binocular?" She responds shortly after.

"Well since the scope has some magnifying capabilities, we should leave it on. Now to aim, you have to set your eye, the sight, and target in a straight line, with the target being in the 'center' of the dot sight, that is where the red dot would normally be at, the same rule applies to the iron sights" I then place my finger on the stock.

"Put the lower part of your cheek here and try to 'align' your eye with the rear sight, then the rear sight the front sight" I then point at the rear sight as i speak and finally at the front one... Saya nods again... closes one eye and puts her cheek on the gun's stock.

"Uh... how do i... align... my eye with the rear sight?" She keeps looking down the sight as she speaks, her eyebrows taking a questioning look.

"Uhh... I don't really have a good way to explain this... just make sure that you're looking the rear sight from center back and not slightly sideways... then try to make the spike in the front sight align to the middle of the... uhh... Tetris 'T' type block cut out..." As i finish speaking, Saya turns to me with a cheeky one-sided smirk.

" 'T' Tetris block?" She 'Asks'.

" Yes, 'T' Tetris block... if you don't like my naming methods... you can always ask Kohta to..."

"I... i never said that... s... so... w... what do i do next?" Her eyes go wide for a second before she turns to look down the sights.

(Heh...)

"Well, while not as important on small caliber weapons. Because their recoil isn't strong enough, make sure that when shooting your teeth aren't tightly shut, but not open either, lest you end up biting your own tongue off... Second, before you take a shot take a deep breath... now uhh... the next part, i've heard two different ways it can go, either hold your breath in your lungs for as long as you shoot, or,

exhale slightly then hold your breath and shoot, both are meant to keep your hands steady." Saya turns to me and nods.

"Which... method do you use?" She asks as she keeps looking at me.

"... None... most of the time i do shoot, i use the shotgun... most time that i use the shotgun, i barely even get to 'aim'... but if i had a choice, i'd say use the second method" I turn to look at the shotgun as i speak.

Before Saya could answer, the radio i had on an inside pocket in my trench coat goes live... or well... it makes a single click.

"Oh, that must be the guys" I lean towards the door, take the radio out of the coat and make a single click before placing it back inside the pocket.

"... Looks like this plan worked pretty well after all huh..." Saya speaks up as i leave the trenchcoat back on the door.

"Yea, better than i expected to be honest" I respond as i sit back in the center of the car.

"Hum... it's... an ok plan... but... i... would have still thought of something if you hadn't..." She 'hugs' the gun slightly as she turns to look the windshield.

"Well even if you didn't, it was thanks to you that we found the radios to begin with, so this is actually thanks to you." I respond.

"O... of course it is, i'm a genius, i figured we could use them one way or another" She glances at me before turning to look back towards the windshield.

After that, she stayed quiet for some seconds before she started 'aiming' her gun again.

"... Thanks..." She whispers after a couple of minutes have passed...

"Anytime Saya" i replied as i turn to look at her.

She then lowers the gun... and keeps looking at it.

"Naier... do you... miss your old life?" She asks.

"You mean before the outbreak?" Saya nods without turning to me.

(... Uhh... well... the only thing i can count as 'pre outbreak' is when i was not 'here'... so... do i... miss that?... Sure, i do have the occasional 'i want video games ' moment... or wanting to sleep more... and obviously not having walking corpses that want to rip my head off strolling outside my front door... and electricity... but... well...)

"Both the then and now... have their pros and cons... i can't say that i hate the now, i can't say that i don't miss the then either... you... do?" I replied... Saya just nodded... and a couple of seconds later, she turned to me.

"... How... can you even 'find' pros in a situation like this?... How is anything even remotely better than how it used to be..." She narrows her eyes slightly.

(Well I'm not surprised she thinks that, she was... a spoiled rich kid after all... and her parents didn't seem to 'push' her too much either, i mean hell, in the anime, she needed to end up getting slapped by her mother to make her listen... and judging from her reaction... it must have been quite a 'new' experience... Yet in the end, she did say that she loved them... and even before that, during all of her whining moments, she never actually said that she hated them either... and... as much as i like her... this is something that i need to say, for her own good... and this moment seems to be as good as any)

"Well... it's just that... there are a couple of things that happened... that would otherwise be impossible to even think of, was it not for the outbreak" Saya tilts her head as she looks at me.

"Like?" She asks.

"Well... other than driving around in a military vehicle while being armed to the teeth in the middle of a city? Us speaking is also one of them" As i finish Saya just keeps staring at me.

"Uhhh... what do you mean... 'us speaking'? How could that be 'impossible to happen' was it not for the outbreak? It's not like i'm..."

"Deaf and stupid" I cut her off... she just... blinks...

"That's what you called me the first time i ever saw you and that was also the last thing you said to me before the outbreak happened" I fold my arms as i speak.

"W... well... y... you blocked the stairs... and i was in a hurry and you didn't listen and..."

(... She actually remembers that?)

"Even so... would 'you' try to get close to somebody who insulted you when you didn't even know them?... Even if you were in the wrong" I ask.

Saya lowers her head slightly, averts her eyes... and goes quiet...

(Uhhh... shit... maybe i went a bit too hard on her)

"So, if there's one reason that i'm glad for this outbreak, then it's because i was able to find out that you're not the person who i thought you were." Saya just kept looking at her knees as i spoke...

"I'm... sorry..." She whispers softly after a couple of seconds have passed...

(... Did she just? Apologize to me?)

"Uhh... what?" I ask as i keep staring at her.

"I said i'm sorry..." She looks at me with a slight frown.

"Uhh... So that means you're going to stop calling me an idiot now?"
I ask as i tilt my head.

"I'm calling you an idiot only when you're being an idiot... idiot" Saya responds as she hugs the MP5 and looks at the windshield as she narrows her eyes.

"Well Saya, just so i make my self clear. I'm not mad or angry at you, if i didn't want to be around you, then i wouldn't be here right now... so if you need my help, just tell me" The moment i finish my sentence Saya turns to stare at me... but did not speak... she... did go slightly red though.

"And speaking of here and nows... we better go back inside... before the other two get worried" I turn around, grab the trench coat, wear it and exit the humvee.

Saya then followed suit after she hid the gun under her own raincoat... I then locked the back door, went to check the front door... and... uhh...

I saw Saya in the car's mirror...

She had her arms tightly folded under her chest and was slightly twisting her upper body from side to side... also... she was smiling... a smile that i have seen only once more so far, and that was when she was hugging her mother...

Yet... the moment i turned to face her.

"Come on, quit wasting time... if you're done, then let's go already..."
She instantly turns around and starts walking without waiting for my reply.

(Heh... chunderes...)

And so... we then walked back into the building... and towards the main room...

"Saya, Saya!... Did your date go well?" The moment we set foot in there, Alice popped up from behind the shelves, with an unopened bun in her hands.

"W... w... wha... Aaaa... you stupid little... Munchkiiiiin~... let me tell you a little secret~" Saya started raising her voice... but then quickly lowers it, 'smiles'... and slowly creeps up to Alice, who just looked at her like a deer that was staring down at the headlights of a big rig... and the moment Saya got within arms reach... well... let's just say that Alice's cheeks will remember this day... for quite some time... all the while, Shizuka was giggling from behind the counter...

"Was that your idea?..." I ask as i take off the coat, hang it on one of the shelve's corners and turn to Shizuka.

"... I got no idea what you're talking about" Shizuka puts her finger under her chin and looks away without turning her head, a slight grin on her face.

(Definitely her doing)

"Well... i guess now we wait" I sit on the counter and turn to look at Saya, who was still going for a full-blown makeover on Alice's cheeks...

(... I just realized... i forgot to reload Saya's gun... uhh... got so focused on Saya her self... that forgot about the gun...)

And in the end, i found my self strolling around the store, after looking at the corpses on the other side of the shutter for a couple of minutes... also... why do i find it progressively harder to resist snacking on the crap around here...

"I'm boooooored..." Shizuka was the first one to 'speak up' as she sprawled her upper body on the counter.

"You should be glad that you 'can' be bored... I just hope that Takashi and the rest can find Rei's mother... alive..." Saya responds as she keeps looking at the corpses on the other side of the shutter...

"... Umm... yea... i'm sorry..." Shizuka lifts her self up and folds her arms as she lowers her head slightly.

Then, I felt something tugging my hand, turning to my left I see Alice looking at me.

"You... are not from here right?... Are... your mom and dad ok?" She asks... and now... very single head in here was turned towards me...

(... God damn it Alice...)

"I don't know, and... there isn't much I can do about it anyway" i respond.

"I'm sure they are ok... they are probably doing overlord stuff... like you are..." Alice speaks in a low tone as she fidgets in place and lowers her head.

(... Are they? doubt it... i mean, they' re not even 'my' parents to begin with...)

"Yea, they probably are" I pat Alice on the head as I speak.

"... Mhm... I'm sure they're alright. They're probably all wearing masks and..."

" *Hey can you hear me? It's Takashi*" And as Shizuka was about to say something... incredibly stupid... the radio in my coat goes live.

(Perfect timing... is perfect)

I walk up to the coat and take out the radio.

"Yea i can hear you, i guess that means you're nearby?" I respond.

" *Ye, we'll be there in a couple of minutes... and we... are bringing an extra member* " He says as the rest of the group gathers around me.

"Hmm? you found..."

" *We found Rei's mother, she's alive*" He answers.

"They found Rei's mom!" Alice speaks up with a giggle as she keeps jumping around while holding Shizuka's hands, who was also giggling along...

"Ok, *w e will keep silent until we get near, talking around 'them', is not among the things that i prefer to do*" And the radio goes silent.

"Well, glad that went smoothly... but now we need to figure out when and how we'll leave this place..." I say as I walk next to the glass wall and look at the sky through the shutter... the rain... seemed to have stopped but... well... it was starting to get dark.

"I don't know how far the elementary school is at... but there's a high chance it will end up getting dark before we can even reach it" Saya walks up next to me as she starts talking.

" Yea, we'll wait for the rest and then decide what we should do... but... I'm against going out there in the dark... corpses are already blind... and driving with the headlights on is like we're asking for an ambush... especially with how valuable cars are right now. Add that driving in the middle of the night means that we'll have to go slower than normal as our visibility will be crap..." I turn to look at Saya as i speak... she just... stared at me.

"You... really thought this through huh?... Still... that means that, we'll have to leave the moment the sun comes up... that would be

five or six AM. Meaning it would leave us like six hours to get there. Normally, i would say that this much time is more than enough... but now... " She trails off as she turns to look at the corpses on the other side of the shutters.

"We don't know how many roads will be blocked off" Saya nods as i respond.

" Hey guys, we're on the road by the store, we'll be there in less than a minute " The radio in my hand speaks up.

"If the alleyway you barricaded is inaccessible then go to the car, you can it as a 'door'... or you know... climb over it." Saya... ended up staring at me with a slight frown the moment i mentioned the 'climbing' part...

" Alright we'll do that then, also, be ready. We're going to make some noise before entering the alleyway, to draw them away from the front entrance " And then, the radio went silent once again.

(Well, getting the corpses out of our faces will make it easier on our mental health if we stay for the night... and with how fast the sun is going out, i think we might)

"Ok, i'm going to the car to unlock the doors" I grab the trenchcoat and start heading towards the exit.

"O... Ahh..w... wait up, i'm coming as well... and... why are you even wearing the trenchcoat right now? It's not raining anymore" Saya starts running behind me as she asks.

"Simple... it looks nice" I answer as i exit the building through the back door.

"Uhh... Have you gone stupid? This thing will just hinder your movement... though it does... suit you..." Saya ends her sentence with a whisper... that i heard... because you know... good hearing and all.

"Thanks" I answer as i glance at her.

"W... wha? I... i didn't say anything. Why are you thanking me, i said you're Stupid. Stu. Pid." Saya i raises her voice slightly as she keeps walking next to me.

(Heh... chunderes)

I chuckle as i keep walking. Once we reached the car, i unlock the left back door and climb up to the roof through the hatch, Saya following behind me shortly after.

"We'll have to be a tad quieter now, the rain stopped so nothing will hide the noise" I walk down to the hood as i glance back at Saya, she nodded without speaking.

And some minutes later, we heard a couple of loud yells, and then saw Takashi's group popping up into the alleyway. And so, they, along with their new 'member' aka Rei's mother... aka Kiriko, came over to the car.

"Unlock the right door if you want to go through the car, or climb up and go over the roof, your pick" I toss the keys to Takashi as i speak.

"Anybody want to use the door?" He asks as he turns to the group... and... silence...

Saeko... was already up on the hood next to me... and the rest had already moved towards the hood.

"Guess we'll be all climbing up then" Takashi responds as he tosses the keys back.

"Yea, it's not that hard to climb up anyway" Kohta responds...

"Then move it fatso, we don't have all day" Saya responds with an angry frown...

(... ouch...)

So, with the rest climbing up the car, me and Saeko moved back and jumped down the Humvee.

"Anything happened while we were gone?" Saeko asks once we were both next to the car.

"No, not really... i take it everything went fine on your side too? " I replied with a question, to which Saeko nodded.

By the time the others were over the car, Saya had also gotten out. So, after i locked the doors, we headed back into the store. Where the whole group gathered up as Rei's mom introduced herself, followed up by the rest of us.

"So... now we go to the school?" And the moment the introductions were done, Kohta asked the million-dollar question...

"I... don't think that's a good idea... to leave right now i mean" Saya glances at me before speaking up, causing the group to turn towards her.

She then went on to use the reasons i had mentioned to her some time ago.

"... But, can we really stay here?... i mean sure, this place is relatively safe... but will we make it in time if we don't leave now?" Rei then asks the second most obvious question.

"Well... if we had a map we could..."

"We do have a map, in my bag" I cut Takashi off and point at the bag that was hanging on the side of a shelf.

"Ohh, then let's use it, it'll be faster and much easier to figure out what our next step should be if we can see the exact distance we need to cover" Takashi nods as he looks at me... and... a couple of minutes later... we were all around the counter. The map in the center, with Alice pointing a flashlight at it.

"Ok, so... first, the elementary school is in here" Takashi points at the rightmost landmass.

"And we're still here i suppose" I say as i point at the central landmass.

"Yes, we're here" Rei then points at our exact location.

So... compared to the river that separated us from the school's landmass we were uhh... Five blocks in distance?... Well, i say five... but... the distance these blocks had between them was incosistent... the first two looked 'normal'... but the other three... each one was like four blocks stuffed into one in length and two into one in width... in other words... it was quite the distance to the river from here, but at least we were still in the left-most part of the central landmass... which was definitely good...

"And where exactly is the school located at?" Kohta asks.

"Uhh right... i remember it was somewhat near a bridge... my mother always complained how she had to take an... umm... how are they called... these bridges that open up in two in order to let ships pass through?" Takashi turns to look at the group as he speaks.

"Bascule bridges" Saya folds her arms as she turns to look at Takashi.

"Ohh... i... always just called them lifting bridges..." He responds as he scratches the back of his head.

"Because you're an idiot... now, can we get back to you telling us where the school is at?" she 'asks'... you know... i find it weird that Rei doesn't seem to care that Saya is calling Takashi an idiot... then again these three knew each other from a young age...

"... Hmm... this block... no... uhh... ohh... wait, here it is" He points at the rightmost landmass... about... six blocks inland.

"Ehhh... that's... not 'too' bad, it's actually a straight drive from here" Kiriko smiles and nods as she looks at the map.

"You said that this monster of a car that is parked outside can still run right? With the car, it'll be what... an hour? Two-hour drive?... And... uhh... ohh wait... ahh crap..." She then stops mid-sentence.

"Huh, what's wrong?" Rei asks as she turns to stare at her mother before looking back at the map.

"We're here right?" Kiriko points at our location, and Rei nods.

"So we need to go through here..." she then runs her finger through the three long blocks and stops on a bridge that was right after the last large block...

(Wait... we never mentioned that the car worked in here... did they tell her when they were out there?... Ughh... so much about stating that we must NOT talk about the fucking car...)

"We probably can't take this road..." she keeps running her finger back and forth around the three large blocks.

"How come?" Kohta asks.

"Shopping district... a lot of traffic... a lot of people..." She turns to us as she finishes speaking.

"... Then our only route is through this bridge?" I ask as i point at the only nearby bridge... which was uhh... six blocks 'down' from our location...

Six blocks down... and compared to the road we needed to take to get to the school, four blocks up after we cross the bridge... so ten blocks..and then five... no... fourteen blocks to get to the bridge... plus six more to move 'inland' towards the school...

(The hell?... Why..is it so far away?... In the manga's last chapter the person i suspect to be Rei's dad heard the group's gunshots...

so it shouldn't be THAT far... uhh... fuck... is it possible that the last chapter doesn't 'count'?... Was it made in a different way or something?... ughh... whatever, no point wondering about that now, it is what it is)

"Well, we don't have much of a choice, do we?... The next bridge is way too far away... and this river, while not very wide, is always deep enough to swallow cars whole... I... found that out when i kind of tossed a couple of troublemakers in that river once... when i was in a mobile traffic unit" Kiriko then points at the next nearest bridge...

... Nearest... with a big bucket of salt that is... as compared to the second bridge? It's like uhh... a lot of blocks away in distance... Thirty? Forty?... double that in total as we'll have to return... plus add that the longer we're on the road, the higher the chance that we might end up in trouble... yea... no.

"So, we leave now or?" Shizuka asks.

"... Going through the 'normal' road would have taken us one to two hours right?... So, let's say that the distance just got doubled... that would be three to four hours, meaning we still have two hours left for making sure we actually get there... of course, i'm not counting the increased chance of finding trouble on the way... but... if we find that trouble in the middle of the night, we might lose more than just time." I keep looking at the map as i speak.

"We'll be cutting it real close like that... what if we miss it?... My dad is there too." Rei turns to look at me as she speaks.

"... Well... what should we do then?" Asami asks.

"... As much as i want to leave right now... there are still clouds out there... with no street lights and the sky being blocked by clouds... we'll be going completely blind..." Saya glances at the glass wall as she speaks.

"So either we leave when the sun comes out... or we check if the clouds clear up in the middle of the night... though that would mean that some of us will not be getting enough sleep, as we'll need to keep an eye out" I fold my arms as i speak.

"Hmm that's not a bad idea actually, there are ten of us here... so if seven or six people stay up, we can cover the night shifts, while everybody still gets a good amount of sleep" Kiriko speaks up as she nods at me...

(Judging from how she didn't react when she heard that Rei's dad, in other words, her husband is there. They probably already told her when they were coming here. At least she does not seem as self-absorbed as Rei...)

"Let's do that then, this way at least, we won't feel like we didn't at least try." Takashi speaks up... and the whole group nods in agreement.

"Wait... do we have a watch?..." Takashi asks right after...

"Uhh... i used to use my phone to see the time..." And Shizuka pretty much answered for everybody...

"Here" I toss the watch i had in my pocket on the map.

"Ohh... classy, didn't take you for a person that wears this type of thing" Kiriko picks up the watch and looks at it.

"I don't... i got it after the E.M.P blast" I answer.

"So... where will we sleep?..." Shizuka asks.

"We have the sleeping bags in the car right?... What about the upper floor?" I turn to Takashi as i ask.

"Hmm well the place didn't look too dusty, it was probably cleaned regularly, so i don't see why not" He answers.

And like that... we got the sleeping bags out of the car... decided who will stay up and when... and then went upstairs.

As for the guarding duty. First, was Takashi... yea, little shit managed to get the best number in the rotation... Followed by Saya, Rei, Saeko, Kohta, me, Asami and lastly Kiriko. Though the whole thing would probably end with either me or Asami.

And no, i didn't make this rotation... Takashi did... Otherwise, i'd have my time sandwiched between Saya and Saeko... Yea, i'm a horrible person...

So like that, the group other than Takashi went to sleep... We...

Went to sleep...

...

We slept...

...

We...

...

... Yea... no

(UGHHH... nope... can't sleep... blame the fact that this is officially the moment where i have no idea what's to come... fuhhh... i expected to be anxious... but... damn...)

I turn around to look at the ceiling.

(... I'll just get something to drink... or go and sit on the car for some time)

I slowly get up and carefully leave the room, before you ask, i was dressed... being kind of stuck in a room with everybody... you

know...

I walk down the stairs and look at the room... we left a flashlight on 'weak' mode to light up the location, so i could see relatively well inside... and...

(Saya's here?... so at least i did sleep for an hour, well no change of plans. I'll just get some water from the fridge and be on my way)

I was about to walk towards the fridge... when Saya lifted her Mp5 towards the store's front glass wall... and with a slight smile she...

"Bang... bang... bang, bang"... whispers... slightly jerking her body backward as she tries to... emulate the guns recoil?...

(... Did i... just see this?)

I reflexively pinch my self as i stare at Saya...

(Yep... this just happened... hmm... uhh... i should probably sneak away... Saya will probably freak...)

"... Bang... Bang... ehehe"

"If you actually try to shoot like that, the only thing you'll manage to do is lose your balance..." The moment i speak up Saya drops the gun and turns around while doing a small backward jump... she... did stay quiet at least...

"W... wa... you... you're not supposed to be up now... w... why are you here... w..." She starts stuttering as she keeps looking around...

"Take that posture again" I respond with a calm voice as i walk up to her.

"I'm really, i wasn't, i..."

"I know, come on, let me show you how you need to stand when you shoot" I cut her off... Saya keeps staring at me, before she slowly nods and lifts the gun... her face a deep red.

"Hmm... right handed... bring your left leg to the front and pull the right one back, also, slightly twist my upper body to the right... and try to keep your firing arm close to your body" Saya starts changing her posture as i speak... trying to follow my directions.

"Good, now... hmm..." As i think, Saya keeps glancing at me... She then lowers her gun... then takes the Luger out of it holster... looks at it... turns to me and extends her arm.

(Wait... is she?)

"D... don't get any funny ideas... it's just that you know more about guns... s... so you can hold on to it until i am ready to use it..." She glances around as she speaks, slowly lowering her head.

"I will... want it back... so you better not break or lose it..." She keeps glancing at me as she speaks.

"... Of course... just... can i have the holster?... Don't think it's a good idea to keep it in the bag... or in a pocket" I respond as i look at the gun.

"R... right... of course" Saya puts the gun back into the holster, takes it off and hands it to me.

I then take the holster, wear it and turn to look at the trenchcoat...

(Well... i'm glad that Saya is giving me this... but..uhh... the Luger is a WW2 Nazi gun... the coat i have looks like a German WW2 trenchcoat... and ohh God it'll be very awkward if i stumble upon an actual Fascist who'll end up thinking that i'm one of them because of that... actually... if a Nazi get bit... do they turn into Nazi zombies?... or regular Zombies?... hmm...)

"..W... what are you so silent for... say something..." Saya's voice snaps out of my thoughts, i turn to her and shake my head.

"Yea, sorry. It's just that the gun and coat combination made me wonder... do Nazis turn into Nazi zombies after they get bit?" I ask as i look at her. Saya just stared at me... and after blinking a couple of times.

"Uhh... should have figured it was something idiotic... seriously... is your brain filled with stupid?" She asks as she tilts her head and raises an eyebrow.

I just chuckle and turn to look outside... Saya keeps staring at me for some time before also turning to look towards the shutter.

We stayed like that for some time, until...

"Do... you think we'll make it in time?" Saya asks as she keeps looking outside.

"Honestly... i don't know... our chances are not that horribly bad though" I respond.

"Yea... it's just... i just realized... won't all the bridges be blocked off?" She turns to me as she asks.

"Hmm... possible... but... we have dynamite don't we?" I turn to her as i speak... Saya just... stares at me.

"... You intend to blow up the bridge? Are you nuts?" She asks as she keeps looking at me.

"If it has concrete blocks in the way... then yes... if it has cars... guess we can lift the handbrakes and push em away, the point is, we must not pull punches on this, we have to make sure we get there before the extraction is over" Saya, after hearing my response stayed quiet for a bit...

"... Yea... yea, you are right... we... do have to make sure we get there on time, as we won't have a second shot at this" She responds as she nods.

"Still... Uhh... i honestly don't know what I'll do if we do get rescued... Seeing as i spend most of my time thinking of how to not get eaten alive... I'll probably end up with way too much free time..." I tilt my head slightly as i look outside...

(And no video games)

"Umm... w... well... w... we... could... hang out... m... maybe... i could make you be less of an idiot..." Saya glances around as she speaks.

"That's... Private... lessons?" I ask with a slight grin. Saya's eyes go wide as her face turns red.

"G... go to sleep you frigging idiot..." She says as she turns her back to me and folds her arms...

I chuckle and head to the fridge, open it, and grab a water bottle...

(... Heh... chunderes...)

calculated risk

"So, are we all set?" Takashi glanced around the car's interior as he asked.

"... It's a bit of a tight squeeze, but we can manage" Rei responds as she tries to fit her self on the seat. Next to her and on her right, Takashi... on her left, Saya, followed by Saeko and then me. Kohta and Asami were sitting in their 'foot section' as per usual, Kiriko was on the front passenger's seat with Alice on her lap, and finally, Shizuka was sitting on the driver's seat like always.

I close my eyes and let out a yawn as i put my hand in front of my mouth, i might be wearing a mask, but well... you know... habits...

"Didn't sleep well?" Saeko asks as she turns to me.

"Uhh... not going to deny that" I shake my head and glance at her before looking back out the car's window.

Now... another thing that i didn't mention is that... with how tightly packed the back seats were at the moment... i had Saeko literally glued on me... again... not complaining...

"Leave it to the idiot to be half asleep in the important moment of the day..." Saya glanced at me with a slight smirk.

"Hmm... yea... it' just that... i ended up finding somebody to... hang out with..." I respond as i turn to her... Saya's face goes red as her eyes open up slightly.

"L..let's just go already... we need to get to that school, as fast as possible" She responds as she turns to look at the front windshield.

(Heh, the wrong fight you picked my dear chundere...)

And with that, the engine came alive... and the car started to move...

(In the end, it was in Asami's 'round' that the sun came up, and as the clouds didn't disperse all night... we couldn't leave earlier... not the best way to start the day... as we now have like six hours left in order to reach the school... but... nothing to be too freaked out about... if we do find a road blocked by a horde and there's no other way around, we'll just use the dynamites...)

I let off another yawn as i keep thinking...

(Seriously though... i bearily managed to get any sleep yesterday... even after my little chat with Saya..)

"Hmm, turn left of the first clear intersection, then keep going straight" Kiriko, who had the map in her hands, points at the road ahead as she speaks.

"Mhm" Shizuka responds with a nod.

(Still... it makes me wonder... what would be the 'now'... was i not here with the group... like... Asami and the car would not be here for one... Shido would still be alive, probably stirring up a shitstorm in the elementary school... the estate would be a sizzling wreck, with Saya's parents being M.I.A... huh... so... in the end... i did make some sort of difference... didn't i ?)

As i took a deep breath, i found my self closing my eyes involuntarily...

(Ahh, for fuck's sake, i couldn't sleep all night... yet the moment the sun came up, i can't keep my fucking eyes open... i know i was more of a night owl... but this is getting ridiculous. Still... uhh... they... can probably handle this without me... so... i... can probably take a small break, right?... Yea, they can wake me up if something happens...)

And... The moment i decided that it was ok for me to dose off, i shut down almost instantly... it's funny how i was able to fall asleep in a moving car... but couldn't frigging sleep inside a sleeping bag when i

was in pitch-black darkness... Oh well... at least the seat is comfortable... are Humvee seats supposed to be this comfortable?

I just... wish that whoever is poking my God damn sides right now... would stop. Uhh, if i knew that i'd end up being under attack, i wouldn't have taken off my trenchcoat...

Still... wouldn't it be nice to find my self in the elementary school after i wake up?... Yea... that would be nice... i mean... for starters... i do wish i had some more free time to spend with Saeko and Saya... hopefully, without any 'incidents'... like getting stabbed, decapitated and going on a one-way cruise on a sailboat...

Also, on a side note... i have the weirdest dreams when i keep drifting between awake and asleep...

I mean... i'm pretty sure we did NOT have a fireball spitting dragon in our car... not one with such a magnificent mustache at least.

... But...

Well... you know what they say... all good things must come to an end... and i'm pretty sure... that somebody is shaking me right now...

I open my eyes and focus on what was straight ahead of me... in other words, the windshield. I blink several times as i keep looking at it...

(That's weird... I'm pretty sure that i was sitting behind the driver's seat... not in the middle... how did i...)

I lower my sight... and see... purple lace stockings?... Yea... these... were definitely not my legs...

(... I'm sleeping on Saeko's shoulder ain't i... this seat... must be cursed... or blessed... depending on how one looks at the matter...)

Then, something started shaking me again...

"Ughh, just slap the idiot already, that should wake him up" An annoyed voice speaks up.

"I wouldn't treat Naier like that Saya." A different voice answers...

"W..well I'm just saying, you have been shaking him for almost half an hour by now..." Saya responds...

(... I'm... never letting Saya wake me up... she would probably end up trying to elbow drop me or something...)

"In either case, we should wake him up, we're near the bridge. And after that, it won't take more than thirty minutes until we reach the school. If we keep up with this speed that is" Another female voice joins the chat.

"Still... that was some good thinking, using the dynamite to bait the corpse away from the road" The same female voice continues.

"We have already used this same tactic before, figured it would work this time around as well" A male voice responds.

(We used dynamite?... Hmm... that kind of explains the flame-spitting dragon... still got no idea why he had a mustache though... in any case... time to 'wake up')

I lift my head from what turned out to indeed be Saeko's shoulder and shake my head...

"Good morning" Saeko leans slightly forward as she turns to look at me.

"Uhh... thanks... how long have i been out?..." I ask.

"About three hours" Takashi responds.

"Slept well?" Rei adds up with a slight smirk and a... rather sarcastic voice.

"... Right... sorry i ended up on you" I say as i turn to Saeko. She just... smiled and shook her head.

"You don't have to apologize Naier, i just want to be of use to you, in any way i can" She responds with the smile still on her face... and... the whole group... including me... ends up staring at her with a blank expression... well... all but Saya... who instead puffed her cheeks and narrowed her eyes as she shifted her gaze between me and Saeko...

(... well... she... laid that one out pretty plainly... way too plainly now that i think about it...)

"S... so, how far are we from the school?" I ask as i glance around.

"Ohh, we'll be at the bridge that connects the landmasses soon" Kiriko answers.

"And... we have, how much time left again?" I ask once again.

"Three hours or so. If we keep up this pace, we'll be at the school long before the extraction is over... we're doing good, no need to worry... Romeo" Kiriko responds with a slight grin as she puts the watch i gave her in her pocket...

"... Hmmm... Ohh! Romeo the Ninj..."

"Nope, nu-uh. Not happening... i'd rather be called ninja penguin" I cut off Shizuka before she could finish.

"Uhh... ninja... penguin?" Kiriko asks as she lifts an eyebrow.

"Yea, he is Ninja penguin the overlord !" Alice turns around and pops her head over from the front seat as she points at me with a smile.

"Ninja penguin, the supervillain overlord" Kohta adds right after.

(Ohh come on, you in on this too now?... TR-8R, we have a traitor in our midst...)

"Ohh Shizuka, take a left turn here, the bridge should be a straight line after that" Kiriko glances at the map before turning to look at Shizuka.

"Oki doki... ahh... i can't wait to reach the school, i want to take a hot bath and finally relax..." Shizuka giggles slightly as she turns the steering wheel.

And the moment she took the turn... the bridge came into view... and that... was all i could really see to be honest, as the surrounding area consisted mostly of tall buildings that hid any further view of... well... everything... Also, this bridge... i think it might be the same one that Takashi mentioned when he was talking about his mother, a bascule bridge. The reason?... simple...

"... Are you kidding me!?" Rei shouts as she looks at the bridge... which was lifted up...

"I... can't drive up that thing... it's way too steep..." Shizuka lets out a worried sigh and lowers her head slightly...

The rest of the group stayed silent as we drove closer to the bridge... There were also a couple of corpses roaming next to it. About... six... seven of them?... but in all honesty, we had 'bigger' problems to deal with right now...

"But... we're so close... we... we just need to get on the other side... so... why... why is it like this?... This isn't fair..." Asami was the first one to speak...

"Shit... we need a new plan, stat" Takashi lowers his head and narrows his eyes...

(Well, Saya was right... so... uhh... now... ok... let's take things, one at a time)

"We have three hours left... the third bridge is out of the question, it's way too far... then, we have the bridge by the shopping district... the

road there has fewer intersections, meaning less space to 'move', and it's also supposed to have way more traffic, so the chance of the roads being blocked off by car wrecks is also higher... plus... we'll have to backtrack to even get there..." I look around the road through the windows as i speak...

"Y... you mean we're stuck here?... but we're so close!" Rei ends up shouting at me as she finishes her sentence.

"So, what do we do now?... You can't exactly blow up 'this' roadblock" Saya calmly speaks up next as she turns towards me... the rest of the group... just looked at her with a questioning look... then again, they don't know what i and Saya talked about yesterday night.

"... How about going on foot?" I ask.

"Huh? What do you mean" Takashi asks back.

"I mean what i just said... we're not too far from the school right? Like six blocks inland and four blocks to the left, if we can go diagonally, that's even less" I say as i fold my arms.

" That's true... but we still need to cross the bridge, i don't see anything that we can use to cross it, even on foot" Takashi turns to look at the bridge as he speaks.

"We have too many tall buildings around here, in other words, we don't have a clear view of our surroundings... now... right before the river, there should be some open space for pedestrians to walk on... so there 'might' be a small bridge for pedestrians hidden behind the buildings." I point at the front windshield, towards the road's corners next to the bridge.

"Hmm... we don't have much of a choice to we?... Ok... the most silent ones among us can go and check if there are any bridges around, then return, there are a bunch of them near the bridge, and we don't know if there are more of them hiding around... so, no

guns... actually, no fighting at all, just look around and then come back" Takashi nods and looks back at me.

"Alright, sounds like a plan, so, who goes?" I ask.

"I can go" Kohta lifts his hand... and the whole group turns to look at him...

"What? Being silent is covert ops One-o-One, and i had training in that" Kohta responds as he looks back at the group.

"... You know, i'm not even surprised anymore... also, i'm going as well" I say right after, Saeko glances at me before turning towards Takashi, slowly lifting her hand.

"Ok, two people should be enough, just look and come back"
Takashi speaks up before Saeko could say anything, She lowers her hand and turns to me.

"Just looking, no gunshots, no close combat" I respond as i look back at her and then at Kohta, who nods and turns to exit the car, with me following suit right after, and once we got out, we headed straight towards the bridge that was up ahead.

"I can see corpses in the alleyways between the buildings... and some of them are sprawled on the sidewalks too, could not really see them from the car because the benches and trees on the sidewalks blocked our view..." Kohta whispers to me.

"Yea... makes me wonder... if they raised the bridge with survivors still left on this side..." I nod as i look at the surrounding corpses.

"... Possible... but the street is a bit 'too' clean... and there's a relatively small number of actual dead bodies around... also, there is nothing around here that seems to prove that there was any sort of blockade or defense set up, no cop cars, no fences and no officers... dead or otherwise..." He responds.

"Hmm... true, maybe they just lifted the bridge and left then? You know, fewer points to focus on" I rest my hand on my shotgun as I look around, Kohta nods at me without saying anything else.

After we got near the bridge, we moved in separate directions. I went to check the left sidewalk that disappeared behind the last building before the river, while Kohta went towards the right one.

(Hmm... quite the fancy sidewalk this is, pretty wide with a brick-paved floor, bushes lining up in the middle along with oval lamp posts, and benches on both sides... add the river that's to the right and this would make for a relatively nice place to relax, was it not for the end of the world that is)

I walk up to the right corner of the sidewalk and look to my left...

(Still... nothing... I can't see a single 'thing' that connects the two sides... I do see a horde on the other side of the river though, on the opposite road... uhh... problems just keep piling up...)

I turn to look towards my right, past the corpses, to the side that Kohta was at... after a couple of seconds, he also turned to look me. I raise my hand in a 'questioning' motion... he shakes his head negatively.

(... Bullshit... Come on... come on... think... think)

I turn to look at the bridge as I lean on the railing... both sides were lifted to about... sixty degrees?...

(... Hmm... it's not 'Too' far to jump... not for me at least... would probably end up on the metal scaffolding under the bridge at worse... but I can climb that... the problem is... I don't think that all of us can make that jump... Shizuka and Saya for example... uhhh, fuck... we got so far... only to be left hanging?)

And then... it hit me...

(... The rope... we have the rope that Kohta picked up!)

I instantly back away from the railing and motion Kohta to move towards the Humvee. After we picked up some distance from the corpses by the bridge, he walked up next to me.

"What's going on? Figured something?" He asks.

"You could say that. The bridge gap, it ain't 'that' big, as both sides aren't completely lifted... so... how about we just jump over the bridge?" I turn to him as i speak.

"Uhh... yea... uhh... you really think that all of us can climb up there and then jump over to the other side..." He 'asks'.

"We can help the ones that can't climb by themselves... and they won't have to jump over... we still have the rope you picked up don't we?" The moment i finish my sentence Kohta eye's light up.

"Holy crap, your right!" He shouts, then brings his hands to his mouth and looks around.

"Uhh, sorry" He says as he looks at me.

"Ehh, doesn't really matter... as i actually have a plan for the corpses as well... and things might get a bit... loud..." I respond. Kohta just... tilted his head.

"There's no real place to hide the Humvee around here... so, we'll 'ask' the corpses to... watch over it for us" I add up as i fold my arms.

"Hmm... that... would make them get away from the bridge... let's see what the others think" Kohta nods as he speaks.

After we reached the car, we got inside and informed the rest... both about the bridge... and the corpses.

"Hmm, well, we got no other choice on the part about crossing the bridge do we?... But uhh... surrounding the car with them... also

means we'll have them coming towards us as we try to leave"
Takashi responds shortly after i finished explaining.

"Not if we leave fast enough... before they encircle the car" I respond.

"... I guess..." Takashi just puts his hand under his chin as he keeps thinking.

"Well, if anybody has any better ideas, i'm all ears... but if we do go on foot... then we need to make use of all the time we have left" I keep looking at Takashi as i speak.

"... You're right... let's do this then..." Takashi turns to me and nods with a serious expression.

"S... so how do we even do this?" Shizuka asks as she keeps looking at the steering wheel.

"First, hit the horn, then, we exit the car and head straight to bridge, if we can't find an opening, we'll make one using close-range weapons... as shooting a gun will just end up ruining our own plan" I glance at my shotgun before turning to look at Shizuka.

"Ok... we should fill up our bags with some supplies for the trip... in other words... ammo and dynamite. We won't need food, sleeping bags or clothes as we are supposed to get there in less than three hours" Kohta adds right after.

"Actually, i think we better do take some clothes... or you'd rather end up with whatever they have there?... If they have anything at that is... also, take some medicine... now for food... well... i just hope the people there are well-stocked..." I open my bag as i speak and look inside.

"Ohh i have some of the medicine sorted in plastic bags, each bag should have a complete set of the things we might need, we can take a couple of them instead of randomly picking from the heap that

we have in the bags" Shizuka turns towards us and points at the duffle bags in the trunk.

... And like that, we emptied our bags and started to refill them.

In mine, i got a good amount of shotgun shells and 9mm's, the extra clip for the P220, some clothes, a flashlight, the combat knife, four plastic bags of medicine and uhh... two sticks of dynamite... with the dynamite actually being in the outside pockets of the bag as they couldn't fit inside...

"I'm set" Kohta closes his bag and lifts his head.

"Ehehe... I got enough ammo to go for weeks..." He says with a silent... and rather creepy chuckle...

"Uhh... yea... i'm set too" I respond as i glance at Kohta.

And one by one, we all finished setting up our bags, though in the end, we decided that Saeko, Rei, Kiriko and Takashi would not take any with them, as they will be the 'front line' and we do want to move as fast as possible.

"Ok, so, we're all set?" Takashi asks.

"Hmm, just one thing... i only got two sticks of dynamite... did anybody take any more?" I ask.

"Uhh, i added a bunch in Shizuka's bag... mine and Asami's... are a bit... full..." Kohta responds.

"I got five in mine... as i also took whatever electronics we had that still worked..along with the textbook and some ammo for the gun" Saya says right after as she turns to look at the MP5.

(Hmm... ok, we should be good then... it's a shame i can't take the trenchcoat with me... as i really like it... but uhh... too noisy... too restricting)

"So... now we're all set?" Takashi asks... after a few seconds of silence... the group nods...

"Ok... Shizuka... hit the horn!" He shouts as he grips his shotgun.

"A... alright!" Shizuka nods and punches the car's horn.

"Come on let's go!" And with Takashi's final shout, we exit the car and run towards the bridge, the four members without bags in the front, the rest following close behind.

The moment we closed in at the corpses that blocked our path. Saeko rushed forward and 'divided' the two closest corpses in her position. She then turns around and waves her arm to us.

(My statement still stands, having Saeko around is like playing with cheat codes... and i'm loving it)

We all run to her and use the opening she created to get next to the bridge.

"Ok, step two, we need to climb up..." Takashi whispers.

"Kohta, got the rope?" I ask. He nods and tosses me the blue synthetic rope.

"Umm... i... am not a very good climber..." Shizuka looks at the bridge as she speaks and makes a sad frown.

"Wait here" I say as i walk up to the corner of the bridge.

(The road itself has a concrete layer so i can't use it to climb up... but... we can use the railing as a 'ladder'... the balusters are a bit far apart though...)

I nod, grab the railing and start climbing up.

"H... hey idiot, not all of us can climb that thing like some sort of monkey" Saya frowns as she looks at me.

"I could climb that though... does that make me a monkey?" Alice asks as she tugs Saya's sleeve.

"Ehh... no, only idiots can be monkeys, besides, you're a munchkin" Saya responds as she pats Alice on the head.

(That... was actually kind of mean...)

I shake my head and 'jump' to the next baluster... then to the next... and the next... until... i was finally at the top. After i steadied my self, I kneel on the edge and look at the other side of the river.

... It looked... clear... in all but one spot... two intersections to the left after the bridge, was a large horde, the one that i saw before.

(Holy crap, from down there i couldn't really make out how big this horde was... well... it's fucking giant... at least we have the dynamite, so it's nothing we can't handle, we can just 'ask' them to go for a freefall into the river... other than that. Hmm... the other side of the river has shorter buildings. Also, all the roads that lead inland, are uphill roads... quite steep ones too... wonder if that's why the buildings there are not as big... looking it from a distance, it does look like they ended up building that section on a rather tall hill... now as for the river... it looks like a twenty to thirty-meter fall from the road)

I turn around and look at the group before tying the rope to the railing i used to climb up, then let it fall. Takashi looks up to me and nods, and one by one, the group climbed up... with Kiriko going under Shizuka as... well... yea, there was a lot of... 'pushing'... when Shizuka tried to climb up... the rest... did manage to get up here normally, including Saya.

"Ok... so... now... how do we go over the gap?" Takashi asks after everybody was at the top.

"... It's... very high up... falling from this high would be..." Shizuka stares at the river below as she trails off, slowly kneeling down and

hugging the railing that was next to her.

"It's too far to jump..." Kiriko looks at the other side of the bridge as she speaks.

"I have an idea." I say as i pull the rope up and start wrapping it around my arm.

"... Hey, Naier... you're not thinking of..." Saya stoped in the middle of her sentence as she stared at me.

"Jumping to the other side in order to tie the rope to use as a bridge?... It's... actually easier than it sounds" I say as i finish wrapping the rope around my arm.

"It... is?" Shizuka asks.

"The bridge has a metal scaffolding under it, even if i do miss my target, i'll still end up there... and if all else fails, the rope should keep me from falling into the river" I respond... the group just stayed quiet... yet... i had the feeling... that Saeko did not seem to 'agree' with my plan... probably because she was staring at me... way too intensely... she didn't speak up though... Saya just stared at me like i was an idiot... you know normal stuff.

(Ok, let's get this over with)

I glance down, lean back... and jump...

It... didn't take too long to realize that i wouldn't be reaching the top of the bridge the way i was going... instead, i ended up 'grabbing' on the scaffolding... in a... not so smooth landing...

(ugh... crud... i think i just pulled my left arm... really need to work on my landings...)

I shake my head and start climbing up once again...

(... And now i feel like a monkey... god damn it Saya. I'll get you for this...)

I chuckle and keep climbing, ignoring my left arm while it was trying to my life hard... until... i was finally at the top.

"Nothing to it" I say in a silent voice as i take the rope off, pass it around the metal railing and pull it until it was completely stretched, then tie it up and turn towards the group.

"Alright, Kohta! I expect that you know how to 'use' this! So explain it to the rest!" Kohta salutes at me and turns to the others as he starts talking... telling them how to fold their legs and how to hang while they're upside down... among other things.

(... This is still risky... but we don't have much of a choice left... or time... and well... i can't think of anything else... also... does Kohta always respond with a salute when you half order him to do something?)

The first one to pass... was Alice... who... well... i think? was having fun?... she was giggling from start to finish... yep, she is definitely a monkey alright... Then was Saeko, who also got here effortlessly, followed by Asami, who believe it or not, managed just fine... sometimes i forget this girl is a trained cop... Rei and Kiriko passed after, both without any real trouble, then followed by Takashi... leaving... Saya, Shizuka and Kohta...

"Saya, make sure to keep your legs crossed and..."

"I'm not stupid, i can do this" She cuts Kohta off as she glances at me and grabs the rope... then turns to stare at the river below...

"Uhh... I know it's too late to ask now..but... why nobody took Saya's and Shizuka's bag when they passed?" I ask as i turn to the group that was already on this side... they all just... looked at each other...

(... Must i think of everything here?... i just hope the extra weight won't be a problem for them...)

I turn my head to Saya, only to see that she was already midway on the rope.

"..If my glasses fall, I'm holding you responsible Naier!" She grumbles as she slowly keeps moving closer... until, she finally reached us...

"Ok Shizuka, you're next" I hear Kohta say on the other side of the bridge.

"Umm... you should go first Kohta... i..." Shizuka keeps glancing behind her as she speaks...

"Miss Shizuka, don't worry you will do just fine" Kohta responds...

"No... it's not that... well... it is... B... but... if i go first... then... you'll see my underwear... I'm... wearing a skirt" She responds as she blushes...

"Uhh... well..." Kohta also blushes as his eyes start to 'wander'.

(... Wait... Saeko and Rei are also wearing skirts... does that mean that everybody on the other had them in full view?... Though... to be honest... Saeko's 'skirt' makes it hard NOT to see her underwear... even when she's just standing still... and Rei... well honestly i don't care...)

"Oh and please take Zeke too" Shizuka then hands the dog over to Kohta without waiting for his response.

"O... ok..." Kohta nods, take's the dog, puts it in his vest and grabs the rope... and easily comes over to our side... and the moment his feet touched 'solid' ground...

"I really want to punch you in the face for being a pervert... but you might end up falling... so give me Zeke and your bag... so i can

punch you in the face for being a pervert" Saya glares at him as she leans her upper body toward him and puts her hands on her hips.

"W..what? But... i didn't look..." Kohta lowers his head slightly

"..Am i... not good enough... Kohta?..." Asami... then takes what must have been the best 'puppy eyes' face i have seen for quite some time... and keeps staring at Kohta...

While that was going on, i turn to look at Shizuka... she... had climbed up... but was not moving... she was just hanging there, upside down, hugging the rope... about... one-fifth of the distance...

"Come Shizuka! You can do it! Hooo!" Alice lifts her hand in the air and shouts... i guess she was also not paying attention to Kohta and Asami.

Shizuka, with her eyes tightly shut, nods and starts to slowly move forward... only to stop about halfway again...

"I... it's shaking too much! I'm scared!" She shouts as she hugs the rope again...

"Come on Shizuka! You're almost there!" Takashi shouts... Shizuka opens her eyes and looks at the rope that was pretty much touching her nose.

"H..hey... this part of the rope looks like a flower..." She says as she stares at the rope.

"A what now?" I ask as i tilt my head...

"A flower, the threads are opening up like a flower... it actually looks kind of prAAAH!..." Shizuka... didn't even manage to finish her sentence... as the rope snapped right in front of her eyes. I just... stared as she disappeared below the bridge.

"SHIZUKA!" Takashi's screams as everybody rushes to look over the edge.

The moment we looked below, we saw Shizuka hanging from the rope as she kept flailing her legs.

"I don't like this!" She shouts as she keeps flailing about.

"Shizuka are you alright?!" Takashi yells.

"Oouuu... I... can't do this!..." she looks down as she keeps holding on the rope...

"Let go of your bag Shizuka, it will lighten your load!" I shout.

"B..but we have things inside..." Shizuka responds as she looks up.

(Are you for real?!)

"If you fall the bag falls with you! Drop it and try to get your legs on the scaffolding!" I say as i grab the rope.

"O..ok.." Shizuka nods and lets go of the rope with one arm, letting the bag slide off her shoulder before grabbing the rope again.

"Grab the rope! Two of you stay near the edge so you can grab her, MOVE YOUR ASSES!" I shout as i finish wrapping the rope around my arm once again, untie it, and let myself fall backward. Jumping off the edge in the opposite direction from Shizuka, before i would end up falling forward with her.

And i then, started to slowly descend, in other words. Shizuka was being pulled up.

(Come on... come on...)

i glanced behind me as i kept going down...

(... For real now?)

I groan as i look at the corpses right under me... there must have been about... five of them?

(I don't have time for this shit.)

I grab the shotgun, aim it behind me...

And pull the trigger.

Again.

Again.

(The)

Again.

(FUCK)

Again.

(OFF)

Needless to say, aiming with one hand made the gun jump around like a fish out of the water each time i pulled the trigger... none the less, all the corpses under me, fell to the floor motionless.

"Naier are you alright?!" Saeko pops up her head up from over the edge and looks at me.

"Help Shizuka, I can handle this!" I shout.

"We already brought her up! She is alright!" She responds... i take a deep breath... and then let out a huge sigh...

(... Ughh... there goes another three years out of my life... still... glad she's ok... Especially now that i don't know if their... plot armor still applies...)

"These gunshots will attract too many of them, we need to go down and move away from the bridge right now" Kohta speaks up right after as he appears on the edge.

"Get down then, I'll deal with the ones that get too close." I respond as i let go of the rope and land on one of the corpses.

(Ohh your asses better be really 'dead' right now)

I grab the fallen corpse i landed on and toss it over the railing, into the river, then grab the second nearest by the foot and drag it away, while in the meantime, Kohta started climbing down.

"Ok, let's see, five shots fired. So i got four left in the gun" I turn to look at the corpses that were walking down the uphill road that was ahead of me.

(They are too close to the intersection, they will overtake it by the time everybody is down)

I take my bag off and open it, then take a couple of shotgun shells and reload the gun before shoving another couple in my pockets. I nod, get up, and walk towards the corpses, leaving the bag behind.

"Ok... So, who wants to re-die first?" I 'ask' as i stop and lift the shotgun.

To answer that question... it was some middle-aged office worker that was missing a... rather big part of his lower body... don't really want to know how he ended up like that to be honest...

I pull the trigger... and the office worker gets sent flying back losing an even bigger part of his upper body. And before that one could touch the ground, i was aiming to my left, pulling the trigger and sending another corpse flying back. Followed then by a shot to my right.

"Saya! Do you still have the five dynamites?" I shout without turning to look behind me.

"Yes! You will use yours now?" She shouts back. I glance to my left and see the horde that was two intersections away... they... were already moving towards us...

"Yes, we already got everything coming towards us, we can at least make one side piss off" I respond as i turn around... only to see Saya over my bag, with a stick already in her hand. Saeko was also already down, along with Kiriko and Shizuka, with Shizuka sitting on the ground, her head lowered and her eyes closed. Takashi was on the rope, Rei under him.

"Naier catch!" Saya shouts as she throws me the stick.

(Saya, you deserve a head pat)

I let go of the shotgun and grab the dynamite, then take the lighter out of my pocket.

"Once we're all down we will head towards the horde! We will use the second dynamite to make them fall into the river!" I shout as i light up the fuse and turn towards the uphill road...

(ok... i... always wanted to say this...)

"E.D.F!" I pull my hand back and toss the dynamite towards the street... and a few seconds later, an explosion went off next to a car... leading to a second explosion from the car it self... that ended up flipping over and crashing on the roof of the car that was in front of it...

"Uhh... note to self... never shout E.D.F when throwing explosives... it increases the chance for collateral damage... and alien invasions from giant bugs... obviously..." I chuckle as i turn around and head back to the group.

After picking up my bag... i glance at Shizuka, who was still on the ground...

"Can you walk?" I ask as i walk up to her and kneel down... she just nods without looking at me.

"Umm... I'm sorry about the bag" She says she keeps looking down.

"Come on Shizuka, who even gives a crap about the bag" I respond as i tilt my head slightly.

"Yea, we're all just glad that you're safe, so chin up." Kiriko, who was sitting next to her says right after me.

"We'd rather have you instead than the bag Shizuka, so don't worry" Takashi, who had climbed down the bridge speaks up as he stops next to us.

"Ohh, i bet you do" Rei says with a slight smirk as she narrows her eyes.

"Rei..." Takashi just turns to stare at her.

"... I know, i know, I'm just kidding..." Rei responds as she glances away.

"Well i don't mean to be the elephant here, but we need to move. Corpses from both the left and right side of the intersection are heading here, we need to go left before we end up blocked off" I say as i get up and turn around.

"Y... yes... everything will be over after we reach the school... i really want to take a warm bath right now... umm... by the way... what's an edf?" Shizuka nods and finally gets up with Kiriko's help... then turns to look at me.

"Uhh... over the top bug exterminators..." I respond with a shrug.

"You can see that we have a giant horde to are left right?" Saya turns to look at me as she speaks.

"Yea, i will use the second dynamite on the horde, so have yours on the ready" I say as we start moving. Saya nodded at me without speaking back.

In the end, we managed to pass the first intersection to our left before we ended up getting blocked off by the marching horde.

"There are... so many of them... what do you think might have happened here?" Asami asks.

"I got... absolutely no idea... uhh... maybe it is an 'old' horde, so maybe it managed to get this big by attracting stray corpses... i do know why they will be leaving though..." I answer as i take the second dynamite out of the bag's side pocket and light it up.

I take a few running steps and toss the dynamite next to the horde and towards the river that was to my left.

The dynamite flew in an ark, past the horde and towards the long drop that led to the river. Though it ended up exploding before it could even disappear under the street.

(Mr. Torgue would be so proud of me right now.)

The whole horde halted, and turned to the left, straight towards a twenty-meter drop into the river.

Or well... that was the plan at least... as... instead of going for a free dive, they ended up getting stuck on the W - beam guard rail...

"Really now?... Ughh... Whose smart idea was it to make the railing this frigging high? Are these types of guardrail even supposed to be this tall?" i groan as i look at the corpses.

"There are way too many of them there, we still can't pass through the road... and we can't wait until they either somehow fall over the

railing, or squeeze to the left... as that blast just made everything that was behind us to start crawling towards us" Takashi shakes his head as he looks at the horde, then glances behind us.

"W..what do we do?" Asami asks.

"The last intersection we passed, corpses there should have moved towards the left part of the road" I turn around and point at the intersection that was a little further off.

"Yea, let's go, before they block it off." Takashi nods as he motions us with his hand and starts running.

Luckily, we were able to get near the intersection before too many corpses had managed to shamble past it.

"Ignore them! If we spend too much time here we'll get blocked off, just run past them!" Takashi shouts as he runs to the right corner of the road, aims at the nearest corpse and fires a shot from his shotgun.

"We will go from the left side!" He shouts again as he, along with the rest of us used the opening to run past whatever corpse was in front of us. After we reached the next intersection, we turned left and headed up the road that did indeed have most of the corpses shuffling towards the left part of the street...

"After we reach the next intersection we will go either left, or keep going straight. Depending on which of the two roads is safer to move in" Takashi whispers as we keep walking up the uphill road.

One we reached the intersection we checked the two mentioned roads...

Both had corpses on them, but the left one had most of them on the left side of the road. While the one that continued straight had them coming straight towards us... i guess the blast was too far away to

make them turn left, as it instead seemed to make them head down the road.

"I say left" I whisper. The group nods and turns to walk towards the left...

"... The road that continues straight ahead after the next intersection seems to be blocked... if we turn left there, we'll end up straight in the horde... so... we'll go right" Takashi says as he glances at the distant intersection.

(Good thing these things are blind... i don't know how many times we used this trick to pass an otherwise 'dangerous' road..)

The moment we reach the intersection, we turned right.

"Oh come on..." Kohta groans as he stares the road...

Corpses... crashed cars... hell even part of the road had given way... yea... we were not going that way...

"... Shit, we can't go from this road either..." Takashi takes a few steps back.

(The corpses here are also moving towards the dynamite and, or shotgun blast..meaning the ones in the road to our right are coming right at us... at least the car wrecks block them off from flooding this intersection)

"So we go back?... the road by the river we took is probably crawling with them now..." Kiriko turns to look behind us.

"And that leaves only one intersection free, the one we just turned left to in order to come here... honestly though, that one didn't look any better than this one here..." Saya folds her arms as she looks at the distant intersection behind us.

"Could we use a car and crash it into the railing below? The road is pretty steep so it should pick up a decent amount of speed if we just

let it roll down the road. Maybe it can rip a hole in the fence..." I ask as i turn to look at the horde on the downhill road to our left.

"... It's Possible... but... i need to ask... are you ideas always this wreckless?..." Kiriko turns to me as she speaks.

"This idiot? He never had a safe idea for as long as we know him..." Saya says as she narrows her eyes and looks at me.

"Hey, i had safe ideas... i just can't remember any in order to prove my point right now" I respond as i shrug.

"Well if we have a plan then we better put it into motion, the longer we stay here the worse it will get, there are corpses everywhere" Kohta lifts his gun and aims through the scope.

"We have no other road that can lead forward, let's do that." Takashi nods and turns to look at me.

"Uhh..Ok... car cannonball it is then" I scan the nearby cars as i speak. The intersection was pretty wide and i could see several cars scattered around... my eyes stopped on a nearby empty blue sedan. It was left right next to the road that went downhill, no corpses in the way, and its doors were wide open...

I run to the car and pull the handbrake down...

"Saeko, Rei, Miss Kiriko. We will hold off any of them that get too close, no guns though, or we'll cause ones on the two unblocked roads to come straight to us, the rest, push the car" Takashi points at the car as he turns to look at the road we used to come here. The group then quickly moves to his order... and once the rest were by the car, we pushed it towards the downhill road, until it started to roll by itself...

(Ok... now we wait...)

The car started to pick up speed...

Only to sway to the right and crash right into another car... about thirty meters down the road.

"It turned by it self... of course it would turn by itself..." I groan as i look at the car...

"Crap... this was too loud, everything is looking at us! Naier we need a new plan!" Takashi shouts as he looks at the corpses on the road to our left...

"Uhh... crap... Ok, uhh, Saya, give me a stick of dynamite, we will throw it towards the road we used to come here, that should stop the corpses from that road... at least temporarily, then the only threat will be from the downhill road as the other two roads are blocked by wrecks" As i speak Saya nods takes off her bag, opens it and tosses me a stick of dynamite. That i instantly light up and toss to my left.

The blast made the corpses that Takashi was looking at to change direction. He then motions the rest around him to follow him as he runs back to us.

"Ok, that bought us some time, whats next?" Takashi asks.

"Uhh... the road that goes uphill is a no go, it's in horrible state... backtracking is also going to be much harder as corpses there are all over the place now... and the road in the opposite side is also blocked... all we have left is this..." I say as i turn to look at the downhill road...

"... Uhh... is the horde... coming towards us?..." Shizuka asks as she stares at the bottom of the road... and...

"... They... are moving up the road... that dynamite blast probably made the ones that were not blocked by a house or wall to walk up the road" Saya responds...

"... Great... throwing that dynamite just trapped us all in here... nice plan Naier" Rei says with a sarcastic voice... the rest... just didn't

respond to her statement...

(Great... should i take the silence as a fact that they agree with her?... well... now i'm sure that they are NOT going to like what i'm about to say next...)

"... We can use another car... but somebody needs to keep the steering wheel steady..." The moment i say this the group turns and looks at me like i said a bad joke... a very... VERY bad joke.

"What?! Have you gone completely crazy?! That's equal to suicide! There are too many of them down there! And they are also crawling up the street now! By the time the driver can jump off the car they will be rolling in them!" Saya shouts...

"I am open to ideas..." I respond calmly as i fold my arms.

"We can use the dynamites to make them change direction, i have..."

"The only road we can take by using dynamite is the one we came from, and everything is already heading towards us from that direction, we only have four of them left... and we'll probably have to use more than one just to pass the road we used... all of that, just to backtrack one road, and what if the intersection after that is..." I cut off Saya...

"I'll go with the car" Only to be cut off by Takashi.

"Like hell you are! This whole mess was not your idea to begin with!" Rei shouts... and the whole group finally turns to her.

"What! This isn't even the first time he puts the group in danger! If somebody should go, then it should be him!" She points at me as she shouts.

(... Holy shit... Rei... must really not give a single fuck about me..and while this 'is' my fault. Talk about no breaks... the moment

push comes to shove she really becomes self a self-centered cookie... but... well... Takashi 'is' the 'love of her life'... even if she dumped him for Hisashi because... because i don't fucking know...)

As i think, Saeko quickly walks past me with her sword drawn... and straight towards Rei.

(Oh holy crap!)

I grab her shoulder and turn her around... only to meet with a glaring face...

"Focus, this isn't going to fix anything... she isn't in the wrong after all" I say as i stare at her... she just... keeps staring at me.

And... a shot echoed...

"If you guys got time to argue then make a damn decision! We're out of time here!" Kohta shouts as he glances at us before turning to look back at the corpses that were now crawling in the intersection.

"So... are you telling me that i should just accept... that you are going to go down with the car... Naier you promised me! " Saeko puts her free hand between her chest and leans towards me as she starts shouting.

(... This... must be the very first time that i see Saeko lose her composure...)

"Sae..."

"You... are not talking me out of this Naier, if you'll go, i'm coming with you... sadly... this is my decision to make... not yours. Let's just say that... you pulled the short straw in the matter" She smiles slightly as she keeps looking at me.

(... Was that a side jab?... i did say something like that to her in the clinic...)

"Uhh... the sword... i don't think the sheath is going to stop water from seeping in... Takashi, i'm leaving the shotgun and whatever shells i have here. i'll take the handguns, got some plastic bags in my bag from the medicine, i'll put them in there to avoid any water from getting into them... while the river shouldn't be sea water... i still don't want them getting drenched... and yea, Saya is right, there is no way to jump off the car and not get surrounded if we want it to hit the rail... so... we won't exit the car.." I take off my bag and then remove the sling along with the shotgun and hand it to Takashi... Saeko... kept looking at her sword... before she also walked up to Takashi and gave it to him...

"I will get the sword back after we get back out" As Saeko spoke... the... main problem came to mind...

(How... are going to get back up?... We can't just 'climb' twenty meters of vertical wall...)

"Ok, we can use that silver sedan that's over there then" Saya runs up to a nearby car and opens the front and back door.

(Hmm... the sea is not anywhere near here... so we can't hope for a beach... and both sides of the river are pretty much surrounded by a tall cement wall for as far as i could see... we could have... used the rope... but it snapped... and we can't go back there anyway... maybe there is a ladder somewhere on the wall... but i didn't check, i don't know if it has one, or where... and... there's another thing. Being it a 'river'... there'll be a current that will push us away if we take too long...

Ughh... God... fuck... didn't take me too long to fuck up the moment we went past the manga... what a fucking joke...)

I start running towards the car that Saya was at as i let out a silent sigh...

(Wait...'we' can use the sedan?... Ohhh no...)

"The windows are open... i know it sounds stupid... i mean... it is an idea you had after all... but... it might be safer to just fall with the car and exit after we are inside the river... from what i saw while we climbed the bridge, it must be about... fifteen... twenty meters in high?... Well? Stop staring at me and help me!" Saya shouts as she tries to push the car by her self.

"Uhh... you might be right... but..uhh... why do you keep saying we?" I ask as i reach the car and start pushing it.

"I... have to make sure that you won't ruin my gun..." She responds...

"... If you're that worried about the gun i can just give it t..." I turn to look at Saya... yet before i could even finish, She was already glaring at me with her cheeks all puffed up.

"... Saya, i don't even know how we'll get back up yet, i don't know 'if we can get back up yet. Y..."

"Yet you let Saeko come with you... why won't you let me... I'm not just dead weight you know!" She cuts me off as she starts shouting again...

(Well... shit...)

"You... better leave the Mp5 then..." I respond as i turn to look at the road... the only thing i could hear now, was corpse moaning... and gunshots...

(I know... i know that i normally... i should flat out deny anything they tell me, even if they are right... i shouldn't let them come with me... but...)

The moment we bring the car next to the downhill road.

"Ok... We will follow the car as it goes down the hill... this intersection is starting to crawl with them... after that we'll..."

"... Guys, I really don't want to be 'that' guy here... BUT HURRY UP!" Kohta cuts Takashi off as he shouts while changing the magazine of his gun.

"Right... i'll check the horn... but i don't think it'll work... so don't count on it" I enter the car as Saeko slide across the hood and enters the passenger's seat...

"Saeko... are you su..."

"Yes Naier, i am sure... if you didn't want me to be like this... then you shouldn't have done to me... what you did in the clinic..." She responds as she turns to look at me with a smile...

"Huh?! W... What did you do to her?!" I hear the back door slam as the car started to move... i glance behind me only to see Saya glaring at me.

"... Fasten your seatbelts... and have the windows open... this might get... this will get... ugly..." I say in a deadpan voice as i turn to look at the road ahead...

(... You know... i should be mad at my self... that i'm letting my self allow these two to be in here... but... well... yea... i'm actually happy that they rather be 'in' the car... rather than stay behind it...)

As the car starts rolling down the road, i open my bag... then take the handgun that Saya gave me along with the P220 and throw them in the bag before giving it to Saeko.

"It should have some plastic bags in there, empty them and put the handgun and magazines inside... and Saya, you might want to put your glasses there too..." I glance at the rearview mirror as i speak.

Saya didn't not answer, but took the bag and placed her glasses inside none the less... then... i heard duct tape... a lot... of duct tape...

"I sealed the bags with everything they could fit in... this... better work... i'll kill you if this doesn't work" Saya closes the bag and hugs it, leaving hers on the seat next to her.

(Not if i die first...)

And as the car picked up speed and started to close in to the horde... i pressed on the horn... only to come back with a negative result...

(Figures)

I then steer the car slightly to the right, so it would not hit the 'center' of the horde... it needed to have enough force to still crash though the fence after all... and seconds later... the first 'roadkill'... followed by a path carved right through the corpses... and then, the car crashed... right through the railing...

And while the car was in the air... i saw a ladder... straight ahead of us... then... i saw blue...

(Oh man... this is... hands down... THE most stupid idea i had so far!)

And right as i felt the car's front impact against the water... i realized... that i didn't wear my seatbelt... and... the world went black...

Uncalculated Outcome

... Ughh... why do i feel... drenched. Like i'm warped in wet towels, hell, even my frigging pillow feels moist... how did i end up sweating so much? It's not even summer yet...

I shake my head and bring my hand to my face... and realize... that i wasn't wearing my headgear...

(... Huh... i remembered to take it off this time?... That's weird... because i don't remember going to slee...)

And in a flash, it all came rushing back to me... the horde, the car... the river... and the two girls that came along with me...

(Shit!... Saeko! Saya!)

I shake my head again, this time more violently and open my eyes. Only to close them again as i felt a jolt of pain run through my forehead...

"... Ugh... the... hell..." I groan as i try to get up...

"Naier!... Don't... make sudden movements... you were out cold for quite some time... and... don't worry. We're all... fine..." A female voice that felt as if it were next to me speaks up...

I lower my head again... and come to another realization... that my head was indeed, not touching the ground...

I finally open my eyes... and come face to face with Saeko... who was leaning over me with a concerned expression... and judging from her posture... my head was not on the ground, because it was on her thighs...

"Ughh... how long... was i out..." I ask as i turn to stare at the sky and bring my hand to my forehead...

"A long time... the... extraction must have already happened by now... i saw helicopters pass in the distance..." I hear another voice... and after turning to it, i see Saya...

"... What?..." I just... stare at her as i ask.

"You... passed out after the car hit the water... and i... i couldn't swim against the current with you my back... we... ended up drifting here..." Saeko responds with a calm voice.

I... get up to a sitting position... and turn to stare at the ground as i process what Saeko just said to me...

(We... missed the extraction?... Because 'I' passed out?... The... hell?... Are you fucking kidding me?... I... shit... shit i fucking knew it... i knew i shouldn't have let these two come with me. Now we're all screwed... What... was i thinking?... was i even fucking thinking?!... Fuck... Fuck,Fuck,FUCK!)

"FUCK!" I end up shouting as i throw the hardest slap i could muster against my knee... then bring my hand to my forehead as i close my eyes and grind my teeth...

"What are you shouting for... we're still alive... aren't we?" Saya speaks up without turning to look at me... The way... she just calmly spoke while hugging her knees like that... honestly... it pissed me off... but...

(... Uhh... whatever you do... don't... shout again... especially not at them... this is your fault... they lost their biggest chance to escape this hell... because of you... because of me... last thing i'm allowed to do is lash out at them)

"... Shit... i knew i shouldn't have let you two come along... now we're all s..."

"You really don't understand a thing! Do you!" Saya's shout caused me to turn my head to her. Her eyes looked... red. She was...

crying?...

She then gets up and walks a little further off on the small sandbank we were on.

"Great... just... great..." I whisper in a low tone and let out a deep breath.

"Naier... The reason she cried, wasn't the missed extraction..." Saeko whispers to my ear as she gets up... I just... tilt my head as i glance at her.

"After we drifted here... we... tried to wake you up... but... you wouldn't respond... no matter how much we tried... you just... didn't react" Saeko then looks at my mask.

"I will say this, just in case you have any doubts... i'm not mad at you... and neither is Saya... both of ended up here, by our own free will..." While Saeko kept speaking, I narrowed my eyes and silently kept staring at the ground... she... looked at me for a few seconds, before letting out a small sigh...

"Naier... a man must never lose faith in himself... for if he can't believe himself... then others won't be able to believe in him either... and... i don't want to stop believing... you gave me a reason to go on... so don't... take this away from me now... not when i need it the most... it's not just your life that you'll forfeit if you give up..." She then extends her hand with my headgear...

"Uhh... you... really know how to drive it in don't you..." I smile slightly as i breathe through my nose... then take the mask and balaclava, wear them, and slowly get up... Saeko just... chuckles.

"It's my duty as a woman... and... to be truthful... i just... don't want to be alone again... i hated it... i still do" She responds with a forced smile...

"Point... taken... sorry i made you worry... so... what's our situation..." I ask as i take a deep breath and look around...

"... First... i think you need to remind one more person... that she didn't risk her life for no reason..." She then motions towards Saya with her head, who still had her back turned to us... her arms folded and her head slightly hunched...

"... Are... the guns safe?" I ask as i look at Saeko... she responds with a nod.

"The bags still closed?" I ask again, this time she shakes her head.

"No... we opened them... and the duct tape ended up ripping the bags... sorry" She points at the plastic bags that were a few meters away, with the guns still 'inside' them...

"Hmm... it's alright, i'll figure out a way to move them when the time comes... but for now... i have another plan" I walk to the bag as i speak and take the Luger...

(Ok... i actually got no idea how to go on about this... but... Saeko is right, wallowing in self-pity is not going to help me, or them... not doing anything ain't going to fix our current situation... not for the better at least)

After taking the gun, i walk up to Saya... who... didn't react, even after i stopped next to her. She just kept staring at the river, her arms tightly folded under her chest... at least her eyes were no longer that red. I turn to look at the gun... and then slightly extend my arm, until the Luger was in front of her... She just glanced at it without saying anything... keeping her arms tightly folded.

"The only reason i said that i didn't want you to come with me, was because i was afraid that i might get you killed... not because i don't want you with me... to honest... i do... want you to come with me... and not just because you'll be able to see things that i can't" As i speak Saya turns to look at the gun again.

"Huhhh... Saeko's... right..." She takes the gun in her hands and turns to look at me.

"You 'are'... a stupid sweet talker..." She says with a mumbling voice, then turns around and walks towards Saeko... who was holding the bokken i had strapped on my bag in her hand...

"Huh... whaaa... Uhh... what?" I turn to look at the two girls as i tilt my head.

(... Saeko... called me that when we were alone in the house... didn't she?... So if Saya knows that... then this means...)

"Uhh... why i get the feeling that you two know something that i'm not aware of..." I say as i keep looking at them.

... Saya... turns to look away with a slight frown... Saeko... just brings her hand to her mouth with a slight giggle...

"That's... a secret between girls..." She responds with a smile...

(Ohh... They 'talked' alright... i feel like i just stepped in an active minefield...)

"... Naier... are you... sure you're alright now?" Saeko asks right after, causing Saya to also turn her head towards me.

"... Yea... i'm fine, don't worry. So... uhh, how do we get out of here..." I turn to look around me as my voice trails off...

(Right now we're stuck on a small sandbank in the middle of the river... with the walls around us still as tall as ever...)

"The river looks clear now... maybe we can swim to the ladder that is a little further down the river" Saeko speaks up as she points to a ladder that was behind me on the wall at the right side of the river.

"... Clear?..." I ask.

"... While you were off to dreamland we had to watch as a river of corpses marched right past us... just be glad that the current didn't let them drift on this sandbank..." Saya responds as she folds her arms.

"I... see... one more thing... we came from 'this' way?" I point straight ahead, behind the two girls. Saya turns around, then looks back at me and nods...

"Hmm... in that case... that ladder won't do" I add up as i turn around behind me and look at the ladder that Saeko mentioned.

"Huh... why's that?" Saya asks.

"That ladder will lead to the road that the Humvee is on... and... well... even if we're too late for the extraction. I still think we need to go towards the school first." I put my hand under my chin as i speak.

"Hmm? How come?" Saeko was the next one to ask.

"... The extraction might be over, but the people there might have left information on what to do in case people arrived there too late... like another extraction spot... or supplies... seeing as the extraction did not happen too long ago... that place might still have stuff worth taking" As i finish speaking the girls look at each other for a few seconds... they then turn to me and nod.

"... Hmm... well... i 'can' see a ladder on the wall that's on the landmass that the school is on... but it's a bit far.." Saeko then points behind me again.

I turn around and look to where Saeko was pointing... and true enough, there was a ladder on the wall we needed to take further down the river... much... further down the river... if the nearby ladder was ten or twenty meters away the other was two hundred or two hundred and fifty meters away... normally nothing 'that' horrible, but... we had to also move the guns somehow...

I turn to look at the ripped plastic bags and notice that my bag was also there... could not see Saya's bag anywhere though.

"Is my bag the only one we got?" I ask.

"That's what i was already holding when we exited the car, not my fault" Saya speaks up right after as she looks away with a slight pout.

"Never blamed you... hmm... does it have any plastic bags left?" I ask once again.

"Only the one with the ammo inside... the other three had the handguns... also... can i have the holster for my gun?" Saya walks up to me and extends her free arm.

"Yea... but you are not holding on to the gun just yet" Saya tilts her head and frowns at me after hearing my response.

"Huh, why? You said..."

"We need to get the guns to the ladder... so... we'll put them back in the bag, tie the bag to the top of the bokken, and then go swimming..." I cut Saya off...

"Uhhh... Why do you have to make everything so complex?... we can just hold the bag out of the water by hand you know" Saya responds as she folds her arms and raises an eyebrow.

"In either case... we have to move, we gain nothing by staying here" Saeko adds up right after...

And so, we started to...'pack up'...

"Still don't know why we have to tie the bag to the bokken... also... you sure bounced back fast from your 'woe is me' state..." Saya, while kneeling down next to me. Speaks up with a slight smirk as she places the Luger in the bag.

"Crying about it ain't gonna help... if it's my fault that you two ended up here, then all i have to do, is make sure that you two survive until you get another chance" I answer without turning to look at her.

"... Don't... say it like that... you make it sound like you don't care if you your self survives or not... i didn't risk my life just to see you die like an idiot... get that in your stupid head before you do something idiotic..." She responds as she glances at me...

"I agree with Saya, if you have the idea that 'saving' us by sacrificing your self is one of your options... then get it out of your head... because it's not an option... you'll do more harm than good if you do that..." Saeko adds up as she closes the bag, unfastens the lower part of the shoulder harnesses and wraps them around the bokken, before finally locking part of the wooden blade on the side straps. She then gets up and lifts the broken over her head...

"Uhh, yea... wrong wording, didn't mean it like that..and ahh... looks a bit funny... but it works" I say as i look at the bag that was hanging on the top of the bokken like some sort of overweight flag...

"Works better than a certain idiot's mask" Saya glances at me before turning to look at the bokken again.

"The who what now?" I ask as i get up.

"It didn't stop you from passing out" Saya folds her arms and turns to me.

"Yea... that's true... i guess" I respond as i tilt my head slightly.

"Yea, so take it o.."

"Yea... no... nice try Saya..." I cut her off as i turn around and head towards the edge of the sandbank.

"I can't see the street that the ladder ends up on... no idea if it has corpses chilling up there..." I fold my arms as i look at the ladder in

the distance.

"I should go first then, i am the most proficient in close combat... and we have only one close-range weapon left" Saeko walks up next to me as she speaks.

"Two, i always have a combat knife in the bag, as i have no sheath for it..." I respond as i point at the bag.

"But yea, using it is like trying to stick my finger in a corpse's mouth..." I add up.

"So i go first with the bag and bokken? If there are any of them... any corpses nearby, i will leave the bag and deal with them after i got up" Saeko turns towards me and tilts her head slightly.

"Hmm... just don't go too crazy" I respond as i nod.

"Only as crazy as you usually go" She grins ever slightly as she answers.

"Yea... no... don't..." I respond as i shake my head.

"So only you're allowed to make others get worried about you?" Saya almost shoves her self between me and Saeko as she leans forward until her frowning face was in my field of view.

"Well... uh... frigging... trap questions" I respond in a low tone as i turn to look towards the ladder.

"What was that? I didn't hear you~" Saya grins and leans even more towards me.

"You're really enjoying this, aren't you?" I ask as i glance at her.

"Well, you can't seem to come up with any of your usual idiotic comebacks, so yea... i'm enjoying this" She responds with the grin still on her face.

"Uhh... in any case... let's get going" I shake my head as i turn to look the clean blue river.

"... I'd... rather not get all wet again... but there's not much we can do about it" Saeko responds as she starts walking into the river.

(... All... wet... wrong images in my head again... huh... to think that a few minutes ago i was going for a total breakdown. I... really should be thankful for the way these two handled this. Regardless whether letting them come was the right choice or not... they want to be here... and that's what matters... i at least want to believe that...)

"Oh... and by the way... you better not start staring after we get out..." Saya glances at me multiple times as she speaks... then turns to stare at the river.

"The clothes in the bag, did you take them out to dry the first time the bag got into the water?" I ask, seemingly ignoring Saya's 'warning'.

"The ones that got soaked yes, i kept the bag out of the water... as much as i could... but exiting a sinking car while trying to figure out what to do with a sleeping princess isn't exactly... easy" She turns to me as she lifts an eyebrow and smirks.

"True... and thanks for the rescue" I answer.

"Hum... well... i did say that you would not survive a day without me... guess i'll just have to keep saving your sorry butt" She responds with a huff and a slight smirk as she folds her arms and looks slightly away from me.

(Wasn't it Saeko that carried me though?... yea... i'm not saying that... let her enjoy the moment...)

"Heh... in any case... what i wanted to say is, you can change into the clothes we have in the bag." I turn to look at Saeko as i finish talking. She was now swimming in the river, the bokken with the bag giving out her position like some sort of weird-ass snorkel.

"Well, let's get going..." I nod and walk into the river.

(I should at least keep my head out)

With the rivers current... i didn't really have to swim, i just drifted until i reached the ladder... which, by the time i reached... Saeko was already on and on the last steps, looking at the street above us.

"We are in luck, the street is clear" Saeko turns to look at me as i grab the ladder.

"Good, let's get going" I answer as i turn to look at Saya, who was some meters away from me into the river.

I extend my arm after i climb up a couple of steps. Saya took my arm before grabbing on the ladder her self.

"If you look up right now... i will kick you back into the river after we get up" She whispers to me as she keeps staring over my shoulder...

"Is it because Saeko is wearing a skirt?" I ask casually.

"Of course it's because Saeko is wearing a skirt you pervert!" She shouts as she glares at me.

"Saya, don't shout, we don't know if there are any of them... any corpses nearby" Saeko speaks up as she climbs up the ladder and then turns to look at us.

"I..it's not my fault... Naier was being a pervert" Saya grumbles.

"I'm pretty sure i did not do or say anything perverted though..." I tilt my head as i start climbing up...

After we all got up Saeko took the bag off and handed it to me... while i... uhh...

(Uhh ok... now i know... why Saya said not to stare... but... uhh... is this... how Takashi felt from... 'that'... view)

And then, my head jerked forward... as somebody slapped it from behind...

"Pervert... Saeko... you might want to... cover your self..." Saya groans as she moves past me and points at Saeko's chest...

Saeko tilts her head questionably and lowers her head... looking at her school shirt which was now... pretty much see through... making her purple lace bra very uhh... visible...

"I'm... leaving the bag here... take some dry clothes from there" I turn around and look down the river as i take off my jacket and leave it on the railing.

And after some... shuffling... i hear the bag open...

"H... hey Saeko, what are you doing?" I hear Saya speak up in a hushed tone...

"What do you mean?" Saeko asks back in a normal voice.

"W..why are you taking... that... off..." She asks back.

"... Hmm? well, they're drenched, what's the point of changing clothes if i have wet underwear?" Saeko answers casually...

"WAaaa, don't say it out loud..." Saya 'whispers'...

(... Wait... does this mean... That Saeko is actually completely naked behind me... is there... a mirror around here?... uhh... focus)

"Ughh... i hate the fact that you're right though..." I hear Saya groan.

"Why are you so embarrassed?... Nobody is watching, and... you actually have a really nice body, you got no reason to be so embarrassed" Saeko replies...

"... H... hey... w... whaaayy!" Saya then lets out a short yelp...

"Hmm... your chest is actually bigger than mine too..." Saeko responds nonchalantly...

(... Is Saeko 'trying' to make me turn around?)

"Are you two about done?" I ask.

"S... shut up you pervert!" Saya shouts back with a cracked voice...

After that... I heard some more shuffling... until.

"We're done" Saeko replies as she walks up next to me and leaves the drenched clothes on the railing... Saya walks up next to her with her face... flushed...

Both she and Saeko ended up in a black shirt and cargo pants. They have also taken off their shoes and were wearing a new pair of shocks... Saya... was also wearing an unzipped jacket.

"Y... you really need to expand your wardrobe... all you have is black clothes... and they all look the same, jackets, cargo pants and shirts" Saya responds as she tries to fix the shirt she was wearing... while my clothes ain't 'skin-tight'... Saya chest... was just too big...

"Guhh, stupid... annoying..." She then looks at the shirt and starts jumping place while pulling the shirt down...

(... F... o..cus)

"Is there something wrong... Naier?" Saeko pokes me on the shoulder with a slight smirk, her eyes narrowed...

"Uhh... no... let's bounce... uhh i mean let's go..." I close my eyes and quickly shake my head in the middle of my sentence, then turn to Saeko... she just... stares at me with a 'You just got busted' look...

"Well, while i do want to go on as fast as possible... we have no other shoes... we need to wait for them to dry... thankfully it's pretty sunny outside... and my boots did not get very wet inside... i think they are waterproof..." Saeko walks a couple of steps backward until she reached the railing by the river, she then sits on it and glances at her boots... seemingly letting go of the previous... subject...

Saya, after 'fixing' her shirt casually walks up next to Saeko, sits down and leans her back against the railing...

"Ok... so you'll stand guard for now?" She asks as she turns her head to me...

"Uhh... yea..." I nod as i glance around.

(She... didn't hear me?)

So, as Saeko was barefooted, we decided that i would stand on guard while we waited...

And after some time passed...

"... At least i don't see any corpses around" I say while tapping the bokkens edge on the ground.

"Uhh... so much about learning how to use that Mepi five or what's it's name..." Saya groans as she looks at the Luger that was now in her hands.

"Ahh speaking of that, as Saya 'did' have her weapon training, my turn should be next, right?" Saeko speaks up right after.

"H... hey... i no longer have that gun... it doesn't count..." Saya turns to Saeko as she frowns.

"Let's get to a safe spot first... then we will see what we'll do..." I respond.

"Very well..." Saeko nods at me and turns to look to her left, towards the street that continued next to the river.

"We... shouldn't be 'very' far away from the bridge... as we spent most our time waiting on that sandbank..." She adds up.

Saya then looks at Saeko... lets out a sigh... and lowers her head slightly...

"Uhhh... Naier... there's... also something else you need to know..." She says as she lifts her head and turns to me... her face taking a serious expression...

"I get the feeling it's not something i'm going to like, seeing how you are bringing this up..." I respond... she... nods

"Is it about Takashi?" Saeko asks... and Saya nods again...

(Huh?... What is it about Takashi that i am 'not' going to like...)

"Well... you see... after... we realized that we won't be able to reach the ladder... Takashi... ordered us to leave you behind... His reasoning being, that he could not allow to lose three members of his group..." Saya lowers her head and narrows her eyes slightly as she speaks...

(... Or... he just didn't want to lose Saeko... just because he said he would not 'try' anything... does not mean he would flat out keep his word)

"... This effectively means we also disobeyed Takashi's orders" Saeko adds up.

"... I see" I respond as i glance away and nod.

"... That's... that's all? You're fine with this?... Naier he ordered us to leave you behind! You would have drowned if we had done as he said!" Saya raises her voice as she turns to glare at me.

"Just because i'm silent, does not mean i agree with him, but i sort of understand where he's coming from... your two were an important part of the team" I turn to her as i answer.

(And it's not like that he doesn't have it in him either... he was willing to let Asami die in the manga without really 'trying' to save her... and he didn't seem to care that it was Kohta that had to shoot her too... i don't know if he didn't realize that Kohta was in love with that girl... or if he just didn't 'care' for anybody other than Saeko and Rei when push came to shove... uhh... guess the fact he wanted to save Alice is some sort of silver lining... But... this isn't about him now...)

"Well... if it counts for something... i'm glad that you two decided to stick with me..." I say after a short silence.

"... It... more than 'counts for something' Naier... trust me..." Saeko responds with a smile as she turns to me.

"Well, as i did already say. You would not survive a day without me, i can't just leave you all by your self... now that i know how much of an idiot you are" Saya turns to look away as she huffs and folds her arms.

"Heh... thanks.." I shift my eyes to the street to our left as i take a deep breath.

(Still as chundere as ever i see. So... uhh... after our stuff dries... we'll head towards the school...)

"By the way, Saya... the bag you left in the car... what did it have inside?" I ask as i turn back to her.

"... I took most of the stuff out before entering the car... only kept a couple of bullets, a roll of duct tape and some medicine..." She answers as she closes her eyes and stretches.

"Hmm, i see... yea... could have been much worse..." I respond.

"By the way, Naier... aren't you going to change?... Your clothes are drenched as well" Saeko asks as she tilts her head.

"I will... after i'm no longer the one standing guard..." I answer.

"I see, once my clothes dry then, i will take your place." Saeko replies with a nod.

And so... we waited... and other than some extra small talk... we stayed otherwise quiet...

Saeko was the first one to change into her 'normal' clothes... with Saya following after her, who also took the Luger's holster... in difference with Saeko though, her shoes did not seem to want to let go of their added water element... so, after they were done... i took the bag and went to change... well... i say went... but i didn't actually 'go' anywhere... last thing i need is a corpse sneaking up on me while i change... so yea, now it was their turn to 'turn around'...

"Good thing you said we should take some clothes... staying in our wet attire would be really bad... catching a cold or constantly sneezing..." Saeko speaks up as she kept her back turned to me.

"I actually just didn't want to risk wearing whatever clothes the people at the evacuation point would throw at me" I answer.

"S... so not only you wear only black, you also refuse to wear anything else too?... Huh... actually, it sounds something like you would do now that i think of it" Saya responds as she folds her arms and 'sways' her upper body.

"That's what i like, that's what i wear" I respond.

"Humm, i actually like your choice of clothing, trenchcoat included" Saeko adds up right after.

"W... well... yea..ok. It was not... that bad" Saya jerks her shoulders slightly as she turns to look away from Saeko.

"And, i'm done" I say as i close the bag and leave the wet clothes on the railing...

Or well... my pants, as my shirt was pretty much dry along with my jacket... as for my boots. Well... pretty much same deal like with Saeko's boots. They were not that wet inside...

My underwear... yea i was not going to wait for that... so i just tossed them in the river... and... i swear... have you seen how cats move their heads in unison when they see a fly or a dot... yea... that's how Saeko's and Saya's head moved... both of them... didn't say a thing though... they just... stared...

So, a couple of minutes later...

"My shoes are ok now... i think" Saya speaks up as she touches their insides.

"Uhh actually... Saya... i think you need to change shoes in overall..." I say as i look at her feet.

"Huh..why?" She asks as she turns to me.

"These... what are they... ballerina flat shoes? Loafers?... Point is, they provide almost no protection against bad terrain..." I answer as i point at them.

"Hmm... i have to agree with Naier on this." Saeko responds right after me.

"... Ughh fine, fine i will change them when i get the chance, you don't have to gang up on me" She sighs as she finishes wearing said shoes and gets up.

"Hmm, mine seems to be fine as well... so, it's time to get going?" I say as i kneel down and check the insides on my own boots.

"Alright... so... what's the plan?" Saeko asks as she gets off the railing and turns to me.

"Well, you will be on the front with the bokken, Saya you will be in the middle, keep the bag and have the handgun ready... i got the combat knife and the P220 but both should be a last-ditch effort... except if want to sneak up behind a corpse... a stab with the knife on the back of its neck should be more efficient... and silent... compared to smashing it with the Bokken" I glance between Saya and Saeko as i speak, both of them nod without any questions.

"Actually, How many bullets we have left?" I ask as i wear my boots.

"Hmm... the gun my mama gave me was empty... the one you had had both magazines full, same as with Saeko's gun and her magazines... and hmm... the last plastic bag we have in the bag, the one we did not open after we got on the sandbank, it has like... fifteen rounds in it?" Saya turns to look at her hand as she starts counting on her fingers.

"So... we have nine plus nine from my magazines... fifteen from Saeko's gun plus thirty from the mags..and say fifteen from the plastic bag... hmm... alright, we can add the extra bullets into the Luger" I nod as i look at Saya's hip. Where the luger rested.

"Actually, you can add the bullets from my gun into hers too, i don't think i'll use it" Saeko adds up.

"No, keep it like that, worst case, i will use it if mine runs out" I respond as walk up to Saya... Saeko just nods at me.

"Ok... so... how do i reload this thing?" Saya asks as she takes the gun out of it's holster and looks at it from side to side... i... stared at the gun... and...

"We... don't have the loading tool..."I say in a low tone...

"Huh... what?" She asks with a slight frown as she turns to look at me.

"The luger's drum magazine normally has a loading tool that goes with it... i got no idea if we can reload it otherwise... uhh, crap... how could i forget something like this" I facepalm as i groan...

"Hmm... now that you mention it... mama did give me an extra 'thing' with the gun... looked like a magazine with a handle but it had no bottom" Saya tilts her head slightly as she speaks.

"Yea... that's the one..." I respond...

"... It should be in your bag" She then throws me the bag with a slight grin.

"Huh, really?" I grab it, open it and start searching inside.

"Well, i figured it would be needed for the gun, so took it with me. Heh, what did you expect, i'm a genius after all" She responds as she puts her hands on her hips and huffs.

"Want a head pat?" I chuckle as i take the loading tool out of the bag, along with the plastic bag that had the extra rounds in it.

"W... what? I'm not a dog you idiot" She ends up folding her arms with a pout.

"So... only dogs can get headpats?... Huh... you learn something new every day... so... can i have the gun?" I extend my hand, Saya nods and gives me the Luger.

"Ok keep an eye here, so you can later do this by your self" I say as i press on the magazine eject button that was next to the trigger and pull the snail drum out, then, after kneeling down and leaving the gun next to me, i open the plastic bag and take a couple of bullets.

"Alright for starters, you grab this folded handle in the middle on the drum, unfold it and turn it clockwise until it stops, then fold it back, after that you put the loading tool with the 'handle' you mentioned in the opposite direction from where the drum is curved towards, then,

you press the handle down, put a bullet, and let the handle raise slightly until the bullet goes inside, then push the handle down again and repeat the process " I load a few bullets as i explain the method to Saya, who was staring at the magazine, nodding every few seconds.

"Ok, let me do it." She extends her arm as she speaks, I nod, give her the gun and get up.

"Humm... wasn't this supposed to be 'my' turn..." Saeko tilts her head slightly as she looks at me...

"Uhh... i got no excuse, you want me to show you how to use yours?" I answer as i shrug slightly, she responds with a chuckle.

"No, it's alright... i want my lesson to be more... focused... so after we find a safe place... that way we won't have to worry about corpses sneaking up on us" Saeko smiles at me... and right as she finishes speaking.

"Ughh, Naier, the bullet won't go inside..." Saya speaks up with a whining voice... Saeko glances at her and smirks slightly. I turn to her and look at the magazine.

"Let go of the handle slightly" I point at her hand as i speak.

"Oh... right" She nods a couple of times and goes on to reload the magazine normally.

(I'm pretty sure i saw her loading a couple of bullets when i gave it to her... she... just said that on purpose didn't she?... huh)

Once Saya was done loading the bullets in the gun i gave her the bag, after taking the knife out.

"Alright, so... we take the road that goes in the opposite direction compared to the flow of the river... and keep going until we see the bridge, after that, we will see if we can go up the road... distance

stays the same after that, four blocks straight, six blocks inland to the right" I lean over the railing and look at the river as i speak, then point to my right.

"Alright... let's go" Saeko nods and turns to glance at the empty road ahead.

"I can't see any of them wandering around, we should be fine for now... shame we have no dynamites though" Saya responds as she walks up next to Saeko.

"Yea, and with fewer people around, we'll have to be way more silent, we no longer have the fighting capacity we had... fewer people, no dynamites, no shotguns, no rifles... silence should be our top priority right now... so the moment we start moving, no more talking. If we have to interact, we do it by showing, not telling" I respond as i glance at the combat knife.

"Understood... let's head to the school then... and once we reach it, we'll see about our next step." Saeko nods at me with a one-sided smile, turns around... and start walking down the road, Saya following behind her.

(... Mulling over what happened ain't going to save us, keep focused on what's to come... still... there is one thing... that i do want to know... what the hell did they talked about when i was out cold?)

Running late for school

(Huh... it's kind of weird how empty the streets are... we have yet to see a single corpse, much less a group of them. Normally, i would be glad about that, but now it just feels... weird for some reason. Then again, a helicopter is supposed to be loud as fuck. So is it possible that the ones that Saya saw caused all of the corpses around here to move away?)

While i was in my own world, i failed to realize that the two girls in front of me had stopped walking. So, i ended up bumping right into the person that was right in front of me, in other words, Saya. Who then turned to me with a frown and moved her lips to the words 'Are you stupid?'.

"My bad" I whispered as i shrugged slightly and glanced past her...

The road still looked clear as ever... but the reason the girls stopped turned out to be pretty obvious. As in the distance, I could see the bridge where we left the car at. Saeko then turns around and walks up to me... like... really close up to me. She leans forward and brings her face over my left shoulder.

"We're near the bridge, should we keep moving forward?" She asks.

"I don't see the corpse horde anywhere for us to have a reason to stop. Saya did say she saw helicopters... and these things are as loud as hell. If they passed from this direction, they might have baited everything away..." I whisper back...

"Yes, that's true..." Saeko backs off and nods. I then turn to Saya and motion her to come to me. She... glances around, then looks at me for a couple of seconds, before finally walking over to me with her head slightly lowered...

(... Don't tell me she's being shy now...)

"You said you saw helicopters right?... Do you remember which direction they were headed?" I ask the moment she got near. She nods and turns towards my right. She then looks around before putting her hand under her chin.

"Hmmm... they came from there... and landed there..." She points her finger to her right, in other words, behind me and inland, then runs her finger along towards her left.

"After that, they took off and continued straight" She then keeps moving her finger to the left.

"Hmm... so, if they didn't circle around the area or had another extraction point to head to. Then that means they went from point A to point B, and then headed towards point C... in other words. The base they took off and the base they returned was different... that's good..." I nod as i whisper.

"Good? Because they didn't return to the same base?" Saeko asks.

"Well, if that was the military, then it means that they have more than one functioning base. More bases means bigger influence and longer reach... so, as long as they ain't trying to kill us all, that's good" I whisper as i turn to Saeko.

"Huh, don't be stupid, why would the military try to kill us?" Saya asks right after.

"Dono, but it tends to be a very common trope in zombie games... they usually end up being the bad guys that were developing the virus and then released it by accident or otherwise" I answer with a shrug... Saya just silently face palms and lowers her head as she shakes it.

"How... did you even survive this long?" She 'asks' as she turns back to me. I just shrugged once more.

"In any case, let's move on" I add right after. Saeko nods at me, turns around and starts walking. With Saya following suit shortly after.

... A couple of minutes later, we were by the bridge. With the road to my right being the one with the car that ended up on the other car's roof, thanks to the dynamite that i tossed...

I then turn to my left and look past the bridge, on the road on the other side of the river.

(The car is still surrounded by corpses. Good, this means nobody tried to wriggle their selves in, or they did, they then failed miserably)

"Should we head back to the car?" Saeko, who had once again crept up behind me without me realizing whispers to my ear...

(I honestly just felt a shiver run up my spine just now...)

"No point, we don't have the keys and we made sure to lock everything" I shake my head as i turn to look at her.

(Real shame too, the Scar-H is still in there, along with ammo and food... i could really use a better gun right now)

"So, we keep moving forward?" She asks as she takes a couple of steps backward, i nod.

"In that case, we can go straight ahead" Saya, speaks up next as she looks at the road ahead.

"I can see a couple of them... but nothing like the horde that used to be there, we can probably just walk past them" She adds up. Both me and Saeko nod in agreement.

And like that, we started moving again.

After we passed the first intersection we started to find the first signs of resistance... take that with a bucket of salt though. As most of that

'resistance' consisted of corpses that were stuck under cars, behinds poles... or walking up against the railing, overall, the road was clear.

So it didn't take too long for us to reach the next intersection, the one with the hole in the railing. To be honest, i sort of expected to see tire tracks all over on the place, but the only part of the road that did see any was right before the smashed railing. Then again, i didn't press on the brakes for the wheels to grind again the ground.

(Hmm, this is the second intersection... so we need to move straight two more, then six blocks up)

As we walked past the intersection, Saya stopped and grabbed my sleeve, then pointed towards the ground on my left.

"Look" She whispered.

(Huh... these are..bullet casings? They look rather long, 7.62'mms? or 5.56'mms? They ain't shotgun or handgun casings for sure. So... if nobody came here after our group and opened a can of whoop-ass, then these are Kohta's... did he open fire here?) I turn to look at the hole in the railing, then back at the casings.

(They ain't too close, the casings are near the intersection's end, the hole is about in the middle...)

Saya then tugs my arm, turning to her she motions me to move forward with her head. I nod and start walking.

(Did they try to bait the horde away from the hole? Hmm... Saya did say that a river of corpses passed through while they waited)

I then look past Saeko.

(And i can't see any corpse hordes down the road... Well, the school should be six blocks up from here. If military helicopters passed to pick up people, then they were probably transport helicopters and i suspect that these are hella loud, double rotors and all. If they left by

going straight from here. Maybe the rest horde, the part that didn't go swimming, got baited by them?)

"Did you hear any gunshots while in the river?" I ask as i walk up to Saya.

"Uhh..." She narrows her eyes and looks at the ground " I don't know... i think? Along with the rushing water and constantly getting submerged... i could not hear very well" She replies as she turns to look at me. I nod at her.

"Saeko what about you?" I ask after i move closer to her. She just shakes her head.

(Hmm, so if they did shoot. It was not right after we landed in the river)

Just as we reached the next intersection i saw an increase in bullet casings, which made a 'line' to my right, towards the uphill road that led inland... and on that road...

Saeko turns to look at me, i shake my head and point forward, she nods... and we walk past the corpse infested road...

(Well, at least we found where the remaining part of the horde treaded off too. So... on to the next intersection, then we see if we can go up)

On the way to the next intersection, i also noticed an increase in corpses, maybe these broke off from the horde?. Nothing too alarming though, they were still all scattered about.

So after a couple of zigzagging, we reached the next intersection.

"Looks clear enough" Saya whispers and she narrows her eyes, looking at the uphill road.

"Let's hope it stays that way" I turn to look at the road we just took as i speak.

And with that, we started going up the road.

The road till the first intersection was completely empty. Minus some crashed cars and a couple of corpses that i could see through the glass fronts of some of the stores that seemed to make up the majority of buildings around here.

Once we reached the first intersection we come to a stop... While the road straight ahead, after the intersection, looked clear. The intersection itself was... uhhh...

(Shit... now what? We don't have any dynamite...)

The intersection was littered with corpses that were moving from the right road towards the left one.

I look around me as i let out a silent sigh.

"Should we turn around?" Saya whispers as she leans next to me.

"And go where? Try the road next to this one?... Most corpses are moving towards that direction..." I shake my head.

"So?... We just wait?" Saya asks back.

"Well. We can wait... or..." My eyes stop on a nearby yellow sports car that was abandoned behind Saya...

"Or?" Saya tilts her head and glances behind her, then looks back at me.

"Or we let the car crash like we did last time, it should draw the corpses to it, we can go inside a store or something while they pass." I fold my arms as i speak.

Both girls looked... 'skeptical' as they glanced at each other.

"Are you sure?" Saeko asks as she turns to look at me.

"If i stopped trying to do something every time it failed, i would have stopped breathing the first time i choked" I answer.

"In other words, you like repeating your stupid ideas even after they are proven to be stupid?" Saya responds as she puts her hands to her hips and smirks as she raises an eyebrow.

"Yes" I answer flatly as i walk up to the yellow sports car.

"Uhh, as long as you are not on the driver's seat. I'm never letting you drive again" Saya groans audibly as she walks up behind me.

"Hey, for driving a car off a twenty-meter drop on purpose, i think i did just fine... the passing out part, excluded" I say as i open the door and look inside the car.

"Where will we wait then?" Saeko asks right after.

(Hmm, good question. Other than the nearby stores, we can use another crashed car that's a little further down. Wait on top of it until the corpses pass. Shame there are no concrete fences around here, what with most buildings being stores)

"Either that orange car down there or inside a store" I answer. Saeko then glances around.

"All the nearby stores that i can see inside have corpses in them, should we clear one out first?" She asks as she turns to me.

"Hmm. It's that, the car, or going to the right part of the road and firing a shot, then leaving from the left part" I turn around as i glance towards the right part of the street.

"The last one is way too risky, we'll end up being too close to them" Saeko instantly answers as she shakes her head.

"Yep, disapproved" Saya adds up.

"Sooo?" I ask as i lean my back on the yellow car.

"We can shoot and then wait inside this car" Saeko points at the sports car behind me as she speaks.

"Uhh... and i suppose somebody will have to wait in the trunk?... It's a two-seater..." I tilt my head as i glance behind me.

"Or somebody can sit on somebody" Saeko responds with a calm tone as she tilts her head.

"Huh... w..wha... who what?" Saya darts her head to Saeko.

"We just need to decide who will sit on who" Saeko adds up as she leans her upper body towards the car's insides.

"A... and how we'll even decide that?" Saya asks as her face goes slightly flushed.

"Rock paper scissors" I say with a chuckle as i fold my arms and look towards the intersection.

"Hmm, good idea, who goes first?" Saeko leans back out of the car and she turns to me...

"Wait... for real?" I ask as i also turn my head to her.

"This plan is safer than waiting on a crashed car that will also be closer to where the sound will originate, as here we can decide where we want to shoot. Clearing a shop obviously means we'll have to fight." Saeko tilts her head slightly as she speaks.

"... T... then stop wasting time like idiots and let's just do this already, we're wasting time and we need to get to the school. I... will start off against Saeko." Saya walks up to Saeko with hasty steps as she speaks.

"So... the winners sit on the same seat?... or the losers?..." I ask as i tilt my head. Both girls stop and look at each other...

"God damn it Naier..." Saya groans as she closes her eyes and drops her shoulders.

"Let's say winners" Saeko adds up right after. Saya nods a couple of times and then opens her eyes.

"On the count of three, one win. We rematch if end up with a tie" Saya puts her hand behind her back and turns to me.

"The one that is not facing off counts" She adds up, I nod and walk up next to them.

"Ok... ready?" I ask as i glance at Saeko, then at Saya. They both nod. I raise my hand slightly.

"Alright, word of advice, no shouting. We still have corpses next to us... so, three, two, one... Go" I bring my hand down and both girls bring their hands to the front.

Saya had rock.

Saeko had rock.

"Again" Saya puts her hand behind her back again, Saeko follows suit. I lift my hand once more.

"Three, two, one, go" And, i let my hand drop.

Saya had paper.

Saeko had rock.

"I win" Saya grins slightly as she speaks up... i think... i heard Saeko click her tongue?

"Now you go against Naier" Saeko then lifts her hand as Saya turns to me.

"Hum" Saya just nods as she stares at me.

"Three, two, one... go" And Saeko drops her hand.

I had paper.

Saya had Scissors.

"I win again~" Saya huffs triumphantly. She then narrows her eyes as she keeps staring at me.

"A..and You better not get any funny ideas now, I'll chop your hands off if you let them wonder" She says with the smirk still on her face...

"Actually Saya, we said winners sit on the same seat, you won both times, so you sit... with you" Saeko cuts her off as she folds her arms.

"Huh, t... that makes no sense..." Saya's smirk instantly turns into a frown as she turns to stare at Saeko.

"Well, that's what we said, winners sit on the same seat. Now... as you did win. You 'can' sit with Naier, if that's what you were actually after" Saeko grins slightly as she speaks.

(... Holy... shit, Saeko just sucker-punched the crap out of this whole gig)

"Aaahh... Don't say something so stupid, i didn't..." Saya cuts her sentence in the middle as she glances at me.

"So i guess it's settled then. I sit with..."

"Me." Saya cuts Saeko off...

(... Ehh?)

"As the winner, i want you, to sit with me" Saya folds her arms and looks at Saeko.

(... And Saya counterattack's...)

Saeko puts her hand to her mouth with a slight chuckle.

"If that's what the winner wants" She responds.

"Y... yea, that's what the winner wants" Saya ends up grumbling as she looks at the car's front wheels.

"So... uhh... i walk down the road and shoot?" I ask, Saeko turns to me and nods.

"As we will need more space, we will sit on the passenger's seat" She adds up.

"Alright." I nod and start walking down the road.

(This whole thing... was way too surreal... heh, i wonder what would have happened if i said that all of us can sit on one seat... other than Saya calling me a pervert that is)

I chuckle as i turn around and look at the car, Saeko was waving at me with a smile while sitting on top of Saya. Who was looking away with the face of a rich kid that just got denied a new toy.

I pull the handgun out and aim to my right.

(... Ok, focus back on the task at hand... for a moment there i sort of forgot we did all this in the first place...)

I pull the trigger... and turn to stare at the intersection. The moment i saw corpses turning towards me, i nod, holster the gun and run to the car.

The moment i reached it i swing the door open and get inside.

(Don't slam the door)

Then slowly close the door.

"Now... we wait..."I say as i glance at the side mirror.

"You better keep your fingers off that handbrake" Saya responds, the pout still on her face.

"Why the long face Saya? Wasn't this what you wanted?" Saeko asks with the smile still on her face as she turns to look at the pouting girl. Saya just grumbled as she turned to look at the window to her right.

"... I can't believe i got outplayed..." She whines with a low tone.

And just then, the first corpse shambled past us, causing us to turn silent. Then another... and another... and soon, the street had a parade matching down on it.

Saeko's grip on her bokken tightened as she stared at the corpses... not that she would be able to do anything if we got spotted now.

This view... continued for some time...

(Why does it feel like there are more of them walking down the road, compared to how many were on the intersection?)

I think as i glance at the side mirror.

(Hmm, wait. I think they are starting to thin out back there)

And true enough, shortly after, the corpses gradually started to decrease in number. The moment there were only a couple of them left behind us i turn to the girls, only to see that Saeko was staring at me with her hand on the door handle.

"Silently, no need to make them all turn around by screaming like monkeys" I whisper as i turn to my door.

"You're the only monkey in here..." Saya grumbles in a silent voice as Saeko slowly opens her door.

I open the door, get out of the car and look at the corpses ahead of us, we had one coming straight at us from the middle, one from the

right side, three from the left and then one more further back in the middle.

I turn to Saeko and point at the lone corpse to the right, she nods and starts running up to it. I follow behind her after i motion Saya to follow us, and to keep an eye on the other corpses to our left. She responded with a nod as she pulled and gripped her luger with both hands.

The moment we reached the corpse, Saeko turns to look at me, i show her the combat knife. She nods and with a swift motion, she slides to the corpse's left side and taps the bokken to the ground, causing it to turn its back towards me. Using the opening, i switch the knife to a reverse grip walk up to the corpse grab it by the shoulder with my free hand and sink the knife on the side of its head. As it goes limp, i keep holding onto it and placing it on the ground, then pull the knife out. After that, i glance at the girls and motion them to move forward.

With no other corpses ahead of us, we quickly reached the first intersection, and after that, we kept going straight with a fast jog.

We run past the next road in silence, which compared to the intersection, was empty. well, actually, compared to everything we have passed through so far, it was empty. So we ended up on the next intersection in no time. Thankfully, that one was clear too... but... there was another thing.

"Police..." Saya keeps staring at the cop car that was parked in the start of the next street we needed to take, a couple of small hip sized fences were also placed to its left and right, with some of them being toppled.

"You think the school's guard perimeter reached this place?" I ask as i walk past a fallen fence and look around.

"Possible, my Papa had about three to four blocks set up as a perimeter" Saya follows behind me as she speaks.

"Really? I remember the distance from the entrance to the barricade having like one or two intersections" I check the cop car's truck as i respond.

(Locked)

"That was only on the front side, in order to have faster access to the building" Saya answers.

I then go to the front at the passenger's door and look through the window after checking the once again locked door...

"I see... hmm there's a baton there... and that's that. Can't see the keys anywhere... hmm... smashing the window will be loud... and we might come back down this road when we leave as this street is relatively clear. I'd rather not risk flooding it with corpses for a bet that might return nothing" I back away from the car and turn around.

"No point wasting time here, let's keep moving, if we decide to open this, it will be after we searched the school" The girls nod at me and follow suit.

(This must be the third road, so, three left)

As we kept moving, the road started to actually get better. For starters i could see fewer car wrecks, corpses were nonexistent, with the only ones i could see being inside the buildings, like on the second-floor windows for example...

So, in the end, we reached the next intersection as easily as the last time.

"Ok, not too much left now, two more intersections after this... wish the hill would stop being so frigging steep though" I take a deep breath as i look around, both the left and the right street of the intersection looked clear.

(No point going on one of the other roads, let's keep going straight)

And just as i was about to take a step forward. I heard a loud... Growl... coming from right behind me...

(Huh?)

I turn around... and see a blushing, wide-eyed Saya hugging her stomach...

"W... what do you want?... i haven't eaten since yesterday noon" She pouts as she looks away...

"Hmm... this place is surrounded by stores, so there should be something with food around here... then again, that type of food is probably rotten..." I turn around and look at the three diverging roads...

"You think they might have a convenience store around here?" I ask.

"I don't know... if it was a school for older kids, i would say yes, as the kids there might have an allowance to spend, but an elementary school?... i don't know..." Saya keeps looking away for a few seconds before looking back at me.

"Hmm, let's keep going up for now, if we find anything that looks like a convenience store or supermarket, we will check it" I nod at her and turn around.

"Maybe the school itself has some rations left, i will admit that i feel rather peckish my self..." Saeko adds up as we start walking.

And with that, we move on to the next street...

(Hmm... a clothing store, flower store, another clothing store, a video rental, a printing store, a bookstore...)

I then end up stopping in front of a motorbike store...

"Huh... why did you stop?" Saya, who was next to me stops and turns towards me.

"You can drive a bike?" Saeko asks.

"Somewhat... but uhh, the store just reminded me something, nothing to do with bikes though" I answer.

"Really? Is it ok for me if i ask what it was?" Saeko asks once again.

(... What it was ehh?... Takashi and You stopped by a bike store when found that hybrid vehicle in the anime... then you went to the shrine and got all freaky with him... probably)

"A movie i saw once, don't know why it stuck to me now" I answer bluntly.

"Anyway let's get going... didn't see any markets or convenience stores nearby" I add up as i turn to the road ahead and keep walking.

"Why when you need something, it's never there..." Saya groans as she also starts walking.

"Tell me about it" I respond with a slight chuckle.

In the end, we reached the semi-last intersection without seeing anything worth of mention... now the intersection itself...

"The next road is barricaded again, this time with actual barriers... judging from their color, these things look plastic" I keep looking at the orange Jersey type barriers as i speak.

"Well they are not too tall, we should be able to go over them without any real problem" Saeko starts walking towards the barricade as she speaks.

"Hmm, true, well let's..."

"Ahh, wait... there's a convince store over there" Saya cuts me off as she points to my left.

I look towards her pointing finger and see a small store with the sign '7' over it.

"Ohh... that's... convenient" I say with a deadpan voice... Saya turns to look at me with an equally deadpan face.

"That... was horrible" She says as she keeps staring at me.

I just chuckle and turn to Saeko, she nods at me, and we all headed towards the store...

The moment we reached the front door.

"Well... we'll either find what we want in here really fast... or we won't find it at all" I say as i look at... what i could only call 'a hole'...

"I can't see any movement inside... but the insides are not very well lit either, so let's be careful non the less." Saeko grabs her bokken with both hands as she speaks.

"Yea, let's go" I walk up to the glass front and look through it...

The main room was rather small. It had a counter with the register to the right, behind it a wall with no doors or windows. To the left were two shelves facing in the opposite directions, one was looking at the counter, the other was looking at the wall on the opposite side, which also had a row of shelves on it. Thankfully, all the shelves i could see from here still had some items on them. On the wall straight ahead of me, was a fridge to the left, to the right, a closed metal door, and In the center of that wall, was a straight corridor that led to a back door. Inside the corridor, i could see a toilet sign to the left... and i think one more door after that?

I push the glass door and it opens effortlessly. Saeko then walks in and checks around the room's blind spots, like the shelves and behind the counter.

"There is a trail of blood here, it leads to the closed-door" She whispers as she leans over the counter and looks behind it.

I nod and walk up to the door, Saeko silent following behind me.

(The door's made of metal with no windows... can't see inside... but... i hear 'something' from in there)

I bring the knife close to my face as i lightly push the door... and as the door slowly opened, i saw them... three of them, all huddled up together in one side of the dimly lit room.

Well, i say one side, but the room had actually very little room to move, as there was a giant table in the middle.

(Shit... we can't fight them in there... no room to move... and we can't just leave them there either if we're going to search this place)

I turn to look at Saeko, point at the corpses, then point to where i was standing. She nods.

(Ok here goes nothing)

I slap the door as i keep looking at the corpses, who, instantly turn to 'stare' at the door...

(... Zombies in semi-dark rooms... whats next?... A long-haired woman with unnaturally long limbs crawling towards you in a long white corridor?... Ughh... shit... i actually just scared my self)

I shake the thought out of my head, then take a step to the left, crouch down... and wait...

The moment the first corpse shambles outside, i grab it by the arm and pull it as i trip its legs with my own, and after it hit the ground, i slide on top of it and burry the knife to the side of its head. I then turn to look behind me as i pull the knife out of the corpse skull... only to come face to face with it's two 'friends'...

Yet, before they could even react, one of the two remaining corpses got its skull split open by Saeko's bokken. Attracted by the sound, the third and final corpse turns towards Saeko. She takes a step back and brings the wooden blade's hilt right under her chin while pointing the edge of the bokken at the corpse's face. Then, with a quick motion, she stabs the corpse as she lunges forward.

The bokken ends up going right into the corpse's mouth. Which in turn, stumbles backward a couple of steps, until its back was against the wall with the wooden blade still in its mouth. Saeko narrowed her eyes... and as her lips curved up to a one-sided grin, she swiftly twists the blade... what followed was an audible 'crack' as the corpse fell to the ground motionless...

Saeko lets go of a deep breath as she pulls the bokken out of the corpse's mouth, she then closes her eyes as she places her free hand on the back of her neck... and after a couple of deep breaths, she opens her eyes and turns to look at me...

"Are you alright?" She asks as she walks up to me and extends her arm.

"Better than these two" I point at the two fallen corpses with my head, then take her arm and get up.

"I'm not going to let anybody hurt you..." She whispers as she looks at the fallen corpses...

"W... when you two are about done, we still have the rest of the shop to check..." Saya grumbles as she folds her arms and looks away...

"Right, let's check the room that the corpses were in, then we..." I didn't manage to finish my sentence... when an awful stench crept out of the room where the corpses used to be...

Saeko puts her hand over her mouth and nose then moves to peek into the room... only to close the door shortly after.

"These three... were in the middle of their lunch, a lunch that must have been going on for quite a while" She turns to look at the three corpses as she speaks.

"Ughh... i suddenly don't feel so hungry" Saya puts her hand over her mouth and backs off.

"Yea we can't stay in here..." I turn to look at the shelves behind me.

"Look for anything edible that's still sealed, we'll take it outside" I walk up the shelves as i speak.

"Yea good idea" Saeko nods and moves to the fridge.

"So only items in closed plastic packages" Saya adds up as she walks up next to me.

"Yep" I nod as i pick a sesame - honey candy bar.

"Uhh we better take some 'actual' food Naier" Saya groans... only for her eyes to stop on a bag of country Ma'am...

"Please, Pasteli is awesome. Plus it has a long shelf life" I respond as i start stuffing my pockets with the said item.

"You're hopeless..." Saya smirks as she turns to look at the less 'sweet' foods that were not rotten to the core by now... while still occasionally glancing at the bag of country Ma'ams...

(She's the one that's hopeless...)

I chuckle as i take the bag she was eyeing...

"Saeko, how is it looking over there?" I ask as i turn to her.

"There are still some cans of tea left in here, along with a couple of water bottles. The rest seems to have been taken, Also, everything is warm" She responds.

"Yea most of the 'normal' food that should still be edible is gone as well" Saya responds while holding a package of... i think was mixed nuts?

"Well in any case, let's get out, this smell is starting to engrave itself into my system" I motion towards the exit with my head as i start walking, the girls nod and follow suit.

Once we got out, we went back to the barricade and sat on the barriers, after making sure that the surrounding area was safe. With Saeko sitting to my left, and Saya to my right.

"Well, let's eat" Saya grabs the package of mixed dry nuts she was holding with both hands and opens it.

"Ahh, Saya wait." I stop her before she could put her hand inside.

"What, i'm hungry you know" She replies with an annoyed tone as turns to me.

"Saeko can i have a water bottle?" I turn to her as i ask, she nods and hands me a closed one. I then hand it to Saya.

"Uhh..." She just stares at the bottle after taking it.

"Wash your hands with it" I respond as i fold my arms...

"I... i knew that..." She glances at me she opens the bottle.

"Saeko you're wearing gloves right?" I ask as i turn to her.

"Yes, my hands should be fine, we should conserve as much water as we can" She nods as she responds.

"Well i'm sorry i'm the only one wasting water..." Saya grumbles as she keeps trying to somehow wash both her hands while holding the bottle with one hand...

"It's fine, we just ended in a situation where we had to eat outside, and the town still has tap water, it's not like we are dying of thirst" I take the bottle from her hands and help her wash them.

"What about later? Nothing is really 'running' right now..." She asks as she keeps looking at her hands.

(What, is she aiming for us three to wander around till the end of days?)

"We'll see when we get to that point, maybe we will be like we are, maybe we will be at a camp, maybe the corpses will end up getting pushed back, or maybe we'll get nuked to space... point is, don't spend too much worrying about it... if it can't help you to come to a conclusion, then it won't do you any good... and after all, you're a genius, you'll figure what you... what we need to do when the time comes" I lift the water bottle and leave it next to her.

"Yes... yes of course... and my papa and mama are still out there too... it's not like we are completely alone " Saya replies as she takes the dried nuts package.

"Don't forget that the military is still around too. Thinking of the worst-case scenario can prepare you for it, but you should not let it command your every step." Saeko leans over next to me as she looks at Saya.

"Jeez. Ok, ok. I get it." Saya groans as she picks a seed and places it in her mouth.

I nod and take off my gloves, then take the bag with the country ma'am and open it... yet before i could even pick one.

"Hey, idiot, eating sweets is not a good replacement for normal food... I'll be kind to you and trade you one of the mixed nuts packs for it" Saya instantly speaks up as she turns to me, her eyes glued to the soft cookies...

(... UGHHH... don't laugh... don't...)

"Khh... ehehe" and i failed miserably...

"W... what are you laughing about idiot, this is a serious matter. If you don't eat someth..."

"I actually just picked them because i saw you eyeing them" I cut her off as i leave the bag on her legs.

"I... i was not..." Saya glances at me as she shoves another seed in her mouth.

"Oh, so you don't want..." I slowly extend my arm towards the bag, only for it to get pushed away.

"You gave it to me, now it's mine," She mumbles as she takes the bag and leaves it next to her, away from my reach.

(Heh...)

"Humm, i don't mind sharing some of my food with you" Saeko shows an energy bar to me as she speaks.

"Nahh it's ok, still got these" I pull out a bar of honeyed sesame.

"Ohh, right... how did you call them again?" Saeko tilts her head as she looks at the item in my hand.

"Pasteli? It's actually Greek... well the name itself is Italian but the thing itself is Greek... i don't think it has an actual English name, not one that i am aware of at least. First time i had one i found the name 'Honeyed Sesame' to be a bit too... scientific? So i looked it up and found more information about it... also, it' might be called a 'candy' but it's actually much better in terms of food quality. Normally, for example, it should not contain any sugar because of the honey. Think of it as a high-quality energy bar" I respond as i rip the plastic cover, lift my headgear and take a bite.

"I see..." Saeko keeps eyes the bar on my hand...

"Can i try it?" she asks after a few seconds.

"Sure why not" I take a second bar out my pocket and give it to her.

"Thank you" She bows slightly as she takes the bar... while all that was happening. Saya was glancing at our direction with her head slightly lowered...

(God, don't go making them puppy eyes on me Saya...)

"Want to try one too?" I ask as i take another bar and extend it to Saya...

"Ok, since you're offering. It would be rude to not take it" She says as she takes the bar while leaving the pack of mixed nuts on her legs.

(So calling me an idiot instead of my name is not rude?...)

"Humm... this is actually pretty good... and you said it has a long shelf life too?" Saeko asks.

"If it has nothing extra inside?... About forty to fifty months" I answer casually.

"What?!" Saya's eyes go wide as she almost spits out the bite she just took.

"You know that's like four years!" She shouts as she turns to me.

"Yea" I answer casually.

"So, did you take all of the bars from that store?" She asks again as her face turns serious. Though it was a bit 'hard' to take it 'too' seriously. What with that small part of sesame that was stuck on the right side of her cheek...

"Uhh, didn't really search, just took the ones i found" I respond.

"Well, we are going back in there then, we are emptying that place of them" Saya almost jumps off the barricade as she grabs the bag of mixed nuts she had on her lap.

"You think she likes them?..." I ask with a chuckle.

"I don't see why not, it's sweet, it lasts long, and it's not unhealthy like normal sweets. if i knew about it i could have used it in my diet" Saeko responds as she gets off the barricade as well before turning to me.

"Diet?" I ask i also get up.

"Well, being the leader of the kendo club and the daughter of the Busujima family. I couldn't go around eating things that didn't benefit my body, i needed to eat correctly in order to have the energy to train efficiently." She answers with a smile as she tilts her head slightly.

"Hmm, makes sense" I nod as we start walking towards Saya, who was already peeking through the store's front door while holding her nose.

So, in the end, we ended up going back inside that smelly place, and after searching around for a while we found another couple of packs that ended up in the bag. After that, we exited the building once again.

"So, ready to keep going?" I ask as we headed back towards the barricade.

"Yea, i'm ready" Saya responds.

"Ready here too" Saeko adds right after.

"Ok, then let's... uhhh... Saya?... Are you taking these or not?" I cut my own sentence the moment we reached the barricade... and point at the bag of County Ma'am's that was still sitting on the barrier.

"... Right... it's still food, so we better take it" She blinks a couple of times before running up to the barricade, she then takes the small bag and places in the backpack after folding the open top part.

(And not because you've been eyeing these soft cookies from the very first moment you saw them? heh...)

"The school should be somewhere around after the next street, let's move" I lower my headgear and vault over the barrier.

(I just hope that we won't leave empty-handed from that place... if we do... guess we can try the police station then, we can check the other evacuation centers there... if there are any left...)

Back to class

"Whoever built this thing, must have been really going for a king of the hill feel..." I stared at the elementary school that was on the opposite side of the street as i spoke. The building itself surrounded by a tall green metal fence. Guess it is, or more correctly, was there in order to keep the kids from running outside.

That though, was obviously not the reason i just mentioned it as the king of the hill. The reason for that was the school's position, as the road we just used to come here and the road to my left were both downhill roads, with the only 'straight' road being the one to my right. So in the end, the school ended up being positioned at the corner of a hill, towering over the rest of the buildings. Also, another thing i wanted to note is...

"So, many of them..." Saya keeps staring at the downhill road to our left as she speaks.

And 'many'... might be an understatement. To put it in perspective, right now to my left i could see two seas, one being the blue one in the distance... and one being a murky mix of gray, red and beige that had flooded the streets to my left for as far as the eye could see...

"At least they seem to be quite further down, even if we started shouting, i don't think they would notice us" Saeko folds her arms as she also keeps looking to our left.

"Uhh. At least there aren't any signs of battle around this street, it's actually pretty clean all considering, and the school looks fine past the fence too. If 'that' passed through here, then the school was probably already empty, meaning that they might have been following the helicopters" Saya takes a few steps forward and looks around the road as she speaks.

"Hmm... Alright, Come on, waiting here ain't going to change anything " I say as i walk up to the front door of the school's metal fence...

Once in front of it, i give it a push.

(Locked, i shouldn't be surprised though, should i?... Hmm, the bars don't have any arrowheads on the top.)

"We can probably climb the fence, it doesn't have arrowheads on the top of it so it should..." I turn towards the girls as i speak... only to see Saya staring at me with a shit-eating grin from the other side of the fence... the school's car gate slightly open.

"Or, you can come through here" She says with the grin still on her face.

"Uhh... they left the gate open?" I ask as i walk up to it.

"The gate opens by sliding it to the left, pushing it won't open it, and corpses seem to only push whatever they walk up against. It was just tied up with a metal chain." Saeko responds as she shows me the chain in her hand.

"... I'm not going to go on about how stupid it is to leave your front door unlocked, as it benefits us right now... but trust me, it's very stupid" I glance behind me as i speak and walk into the school's field.

After Saeko got in we closed the gate and 'locked' it again.

"Well... now what?" Saya asks as she looks around.

"This place looks abandoned" Saeko adds up as she looks at the small tents that littered the field in front of the main building, the whole scene looked a lot like the front of the police station, just a bit more organized...

"Before we go inside, let's check the outside first, i saw an open field through the fence to our left" I point towards my left as i speak.

"Ok, let's go" Saya nods and turns to walk to her left. The rest, aka me and Saeko, following behind her...

"Do you think the rest made it here safely?" Saeko asks as we keep walking.

"Can't really tell, we didn't find any signs that prove that they failed to do so on our way here, didn't find anything that proves that they did either" I respond as i look back towards the main building.

"I'm sure they're alright, it's not like they turned 'completely' useless after we got cut off. Plus, i need to kick Takashi in the face for what he said " Saya narrows her eyes slightly as she speaks...

"Actually, speaking about it, i hope i'm not prying but i need to ask. Naier, why are you not mad?" Saeko asks right after.

"You mean about Takashi's order?" I ask back.

"Of course she means about Takashi order you idiot, what else could it be?" Saya then turns to me with a frown.

"Uhh... as i did mention, i sort of understand where he..."

"Ughh, don't give me that crap, you were willing to shoot a kid in the face because in your eyes, he endangered the group, and now you mean to tell me that you're fine with 'this'?" Saya cuts me off as she folds her arms...

I let out a sigh and stay quiet for a few seconds as we walk in to the open field.

"So you want me to kill your childhood friend?..." I ask with a serious tone as i turn to her. Saya just... stares at me...

"I... didn't say that, don't go from one side of the scale to the other... and how did you know he was my childhood friend, i never told you" Saya narrows her eyes even more as she keeps looking at me.

(Oh crap, she didn't? I can't remember...)

"... Your mother mentioned it" I respond with a deadpan voice.

"Uhh, Of course she would go and do something like that..." Saya grumbles as she closes her eyes and shakes her head slightly.

"The point is, he was willing to listen to the reasons for my actions at the mall and we managed to work together so far. I should at least be willing to do the same and listen to his reasons. The world as is right now is going to have a lot more..." I stop and glance at Saeko who was a few steps next to me.

(I want to say psychopaths but... i don't know if Saeko will take it the wrong way...)

"More hostile individuals. As they are more likely to survive the initial chaos... so if somebody is willing to work with us. We should try to keep that bridge 'unburned' for as long as possible. Nobody can survive alone for too long, no matter how much of a badass they might be." As add up after a few seconds.

"... I really don't understand you some times... on one side you are willing to pull the trigger the moment you decide that somebody is a threat. On the other, you are willing to sit a listen to somebody who clearly knew that his actions would kill you..." Saya responds.

"Yes, but don't mistake 'listen' with 'trust', i'm not going to go after Takashi if we meet up again because doing so would end up badly for all of us, but that doesn't mean i will trust his actions" I answer.

"And what's the point on being in a group you don't trust?" Saya asks right after.

"Ehh, well Takashi excluded, i do trust the rest, but you make a good point. Maybe i should just lock my self in a mansion near a cliff... or a Yacht..." I say with a slight chuckle as i look around the field.

(Hmm, other than a couple of D.I.Y scaffoldings made of desks next to the metal fence, the place is clear... and absolutely emty.)

"Ughh, no Yachts, i hate them" Saya groans as she also starts looking around.

"You've been in one?" I ask as i lift an eyebrow.

"More than once. Some stuck up fatso that my father collaborated with had one. I was dragged there a couple of times on 'Parties' he arranged. Being stuck there for hours without end while having nothing to do... yea, i don't like Yachts." Saya folds her arms as she turns to me.

"Fine, you can stay in the mansion, but i'm still going on a boat trip" I respond.

"Hmm, a trip on a boat away from all of this does sound nice, got space for one more? If Saya wants to stay back, she can. I don't mind being just the two of us" Saeko 'asks' as she looks around, before turning to glance at me with a slight smile.

"O... oook can we stop talking about flying ships like a bunch of idiots now? We still need to search this place, and this place has nothing, so let's go back and check the entrance again" Saya butts in before I could answer. She then pretty much dragged me behind her after grabbing me by my sleeve.

Saeko just chuckled as she followed behind.

"What are you so embarrassed about?" I ask as i look at the pink-haired girl.

"I'm not embarrassed!" She shouts as she glances at me... her face obviously red.

And with Saya dragging me behind her while 'not' being embarrassed, we reached the front of the school once more.

"Ok, and what should we look for in here?" Saeko asks as she casually walks past us after me and Saya stopped walking, or more like Saya stopped dragging me behind her.

"Hmm... check the tents for anything that might have been left behind, water, rations, bullets... anything. Though i doubt they would accidentally 'drop' any stuff like that." Saya lets go of my arm as i speak.

"Should we split up?" Saeko asks again as she turns to me.

"Yea, but stay within sight. Search only the surrounding area on the front part of the building" I walk past the girls as i point at the nearby tents, and like that, we spread out and start searching...

The first place i headed to was a table under a tent that the girls were not looking at...

(Hmm... other than ripped plastic bags, cigarette butts, and two mugs... i can't see anything else.)

I take a step back and then look under the table.

(Uhhh, there's a gum stuck here... wonder if it has been there since before the outbreak...)

I shake my head and move towards another table, this one closer to the front door of the main building.

(... Humm there's a blue box next to it, looks like an ice cooler)

I kneel down next to the table and open the said blue box.

(Aaand, Nothing. If there was anything in here, it's not anymore)

I get up and look around once more.

(This place is really empty... at least on the outside)

I start to slowly walk towards the main door as i look around... until my eyes stopped on a bulletin board that was erected a few meters away from the front entrance of the main building.

(Huh, this thing is full of post-it notes)

I tilt my head slightly as i walk up to the board, then grab a random note.

(Kamille, it's Shin.

If you manage to read this, me and the rest made it to the extraction safely.

We will be sent to an aircraft carrier out in the open sea via helicopter. After that, they said we'll go to locations that have been secured from whatever this is.

I hope you are ok. Stay safe.)

I let go of the note and take another one...

(Hmm... same deal)

Then check another one.

(Again, more of the same. Everything here is talking about helicopters, aircraft carriers and 'secure locations'... wonder what these are, military encampments or something?... Uhh, personally, i don't know how to feel about having armed personnel that i don't know 'watch' over me from a close distance, probably because of all the movies i have seen where it goes horribly wrong... but still, none

of these have any information on what to do if you get here late. They feel more like farewell cards if anything else...)

I let go of the note i was holding and turn to the board once again...

(Maybe 'our' group left something?... hmm)

"Hey you two! If you found nothing, then come over here for a sec!" I turn to glance behind me before turning to look back at the board.

"Ughh, You don't have to shout you know" Saya groans as she walks up to me.

"Found something?" Saeko asks the moment she got near.

"Might have... this board seems to have notes that were written by the people here, maybe our group left some information we could use" I say as i fold my arms and scan the notes on the board. The girls nod and then also turn towards the board.

In order to avoid looking at the same note over and over again, each time i looked at one, i took it off the board...

"Are you sure you should do that Naier? I know we can't be all good, but other people might be depending on these notes" Saya glances at me as she stops moving her finger over the notes.

"I think we should be worrying about our problems first" Saeko glances at Saya before looking back at the board.

"No, Saya's right. No need to make everybody's life harder if we can avoid it, and avoiding it here is as simple as putting the notes back on after we're done. So i see no problem with it as long as it does not end up to our detriment" I say as i keep looking at the board. Saeko, didn't respond...

(... Did me not agreeing with her nudge her off?)

Turning to her i find her staring intensely at the board...

"I found something" She says shortly after. Then takes a post-it note and hands it to me. I glance at the note that looked like a wall of text, and then start reading it out loud.

"To Saeko, Saya and Naier.

We hope you're all alright. We managed to make it here in time thanks to you, but sadly, we could not get people to send a rescue team, as they were all preparing for the evacuation. Also, we found Rei's father and Takashi's mom here, they are all safe.

Now, Rei's dad mentioned that when the Police force from his station got dispatched, half of the people from there got sent here, the other half got sent to a mansion in the central landmass, last they heard from that place, it was used as a refuge camp, the address you should look for is Senta 2-51-20. Apparently, based on Rei's dad, the evacuation there is to happen five days after this one." The note ended there.

"Hmm... Senta 2-51-20? Where in the crap is that?" I ask as i tilt my head.

"We no longer have a map, i have no idea" Saya folds her arms as she keeps looking at the note.

"Well, this is better than nothing, let's put the other notes ba... uhh... wait, there's more" I casually flip over the note addressed to us as i speak, only to see that there was more written on the back side.

"... Rei's father also said that the army will be taking our stuff, especially the shotguns, as they are more efficient for guarding locations compared to rifles, mostly urban ones. Because close quarters fights are more common there.

We did manage to leave a couple of stuff behind to help you out though. After all, there's no way that you three would just die like that. So, on the second floor in the principal's office, there's a safe, a hip high mini vault type one. Takashi's mom said that it was owned

by the principal as it was here even before the outbreak. Thankfully the password was inside the principal's textbook notes so we were able to open it and change the password, so we left some stuff inside it. The new password is Takashi's birthday" And the note ended there for real this time.

"... Takashi's birthday?..." I turn to look at Saya...

"... W... what? Why are you looking at me?" Saya's face turns into a frown as she folds her arms.

"Uhh... i didn't know Takashi before the outbreak..." I respond...

"Neither did i." Saeko adds up...

"Uhh... f..fine... i know when his birthday is at, it's on 7th of December..." She grumbles.

"The only reason i do know it is because he was always acting like a crybaby when i didn't get him a present..." She pouts slightly as she looks away.

(And totally not because you had/have a crush on him...)

"Still, This works perfectly for us. Shall we go to the second floor?" Saeko speaks up next.

"Yea let's go, after we put the notes back on the board" I nod, then lift the notes i was holding. Saya also nods and starts sticking the notes she had back on the board.

"Alright, can i have some? I didn't take off the ones that i checked" Saeko turns to me and extends her arm. I take half of the ones i was holding and hand them to her, then start sticking the remaining ones i had on the board, With Saeko following suit.

"Should we search the rest of the school too?" Saya asks as she keeps sticking the notes on the board.

"Yea, after we check the principal's office we will search the second and then first floor." I respond, Saya just nods without answering back.

We then continued in silence...

(The building inside should also be clear of corpses, seeing as the whole place seems to be clear of them. So we should be able to go straight to the second floor without too much of a fuss. I wonder what they left behind. Hmm, Takashi probably still has feelings for Saeko... maybe that's why he ordered that i be left behind in the first place. I just hope that means that he also considered leaving something behind to help with her, aka our survival.)

"Aaand i'm done" Saya takes a step back as she wipes her hands.

"I'm almost done too" Saeko adds up as she nods.

"Same" I say right after.

"So, we are going in the building next?" Saya asks as she walks towards the double glass door that was a few meters away to our right.

"Yea. I don't expect corpses to be in there, but don't head off by your self" I respond as i turn to glance at Saya.

"Of course i'm not going to head off by my self, i'm not you you idiot" Saya turns to me with a slight grin.

"Still... who was the retard who thought that putting a giant double glass door in an elementary school was a good idea? It's like an incident waiting to happen with all the kids running around" She then turns to look back at the door.

"Maybe it's reinforced and or tempered glass." I say as i stick the last note i was holding on the board.

"Not that it really matters now, does it?" Saeko, who also just finished, turns to me as she asks.

"Yea, true that. So, come on, we're done here so let's go check the second floor" I respond as i motion towards the door that Saya was next to with my head.

The moment all three of us were by the entrance, i pushed the door, which opened effortlessly.

(At least this one is unlocked...)

As for our destination, it was actually made clear before we even stepped inside. As we could see a set of stairs that led to the second floor through the glass door, the reason being, it was a straight line from here.

"Looks safe, i can't see any signs of struggle or intrusion" Saeko looks from left to right as she speaks...

Other than the hallway with the stairs that was behind the shoe locker ahead of us, there were also two wider hallways to our left and right. Both consisted of windowed walls on the side that looked towards the field, the other side had concrete walls with wooden sliding doors every so often. Classrooms if i had to take a guess.

Now the hallway ahead of us also had two doors in the wall to it's left, these were closer to each other. In other words, too small to be classrooms. Storages i suppose? To the right wall of the same hallway were another set of wooden sliding doors that led to even more classrooms, and lastly, the staircase that we were aiming for, deeper in that hallway.

"Well, let's keep our eyes open and head to the second floor" I start walking towards the stairs as i speak. The girls nod and follow behind me.

Also on a side note, after we walked passed the two doors to the left, the ones that i think are storage rooms. There was also one more door after that seemed to lead into a classroom, the reason i could not see it before was because the 'storage rooms' are actually protruding from the wall, or more correctly, it was that the wall after these doors was recessed.

And with that, we went up the stairs and up to the second floor.

"Hmm... which way now?" Saya asks as she turns to me. I glance at her before looking around me.

The upper floor was actually just a long hallway. windowed walls to the right, cement walls to the left, again, with wooden sliding doors. Other than that, it had nothing else... well, there were a couple of notice boards with kid drawings on them but that's about it.

"We need to find the principal's room" Saeko speaks up after a short silence.

"Hmm, let's look around, this hallway seems to consist only of classrooms." I nod, turn around and start walking down the hallway, the girls turning to follow me shortly after.

"I know it's probably because of my memory of our school... but i just can't shake the feeling that something will jump out from a door any second now..." Saya glances around as she keeps walking next to me.

"Yea... the fact that it's so damn quiet doesn't help either, but hey, at least it ain't a hospital. Clean white hallways splattered with blood and guts mixed with the smell of disinfectants, add the lack of electricity that would also make some of the rooms in there be pitch bl..."

"W... will you shut up already" Saya cuts me off as we reach the end of the hallway.

"Uhh. Right, sorry. Didn't realize it scared you " I respond as i turn to her with a slight grin.

"What?... I... i never said it was scary. You were just being stupid..."
Saya narrows her eyes before darting her head away...

(Yes, yes, of course)

"... Naier, i think we found our target" Saeko then lifts her hand and points at a door straight ahead of us, at the end of the hallway we just turned to. On the door a metal sign with a slight golden shin, the letters 'PRINCIPAL' engraved on it.

"The principal's room, nice" I nod as i focus my sight on the distant door.

"Great, out of the three people here, two have perfect eyesight..."
Saya whines as she pushes her glasses with her middle finger.

"There, there" I respond as i pat her head. She instantly jumps in place before taking a hop back, putting both her hands on her head as she looks at me with a pout.

"Quit being an idiot" She responds with her face slightly red...

(Jeez, it's not like my hands are radioactive or something)

I shake my head slightly and turn around. We then walked to the end of the hallway, towards the principal's door. Once there i try to open it.

"Unlocked. Well, they're supposed to have stuff for us in here and didn't mention anything about locking this door" I say as i open it, walk inside and...

"Uhh... What... the... fuck?" Was all i could say as i looked around at the room...

"Ughh... i really hope i don't have to meet this 'principal'..." Saya groans as she looks around the room. That was, in one word. Extravagant...

The vinyl style floor that consisted so far got replaced by wooden, dark crimson/brown boards. On the left wall, a short wooden cupboard with a couple of model airplanes on it. Next to it, an antique wooden double glass door cabinet with several trophies and awards on display, and after that a small brown... fridge?

To the right, a bookcase extended from one side of the wall to the other, all filled with books that were neatly organized, and finally, next to that bookcase was the safe we were looking for. The wall ahead of us was made of large windows, having a clear view of the downhill road we used to come here. There was also a giant ass desk with an even bigger ass chair in the middle of the room. The desk, other than a pencil case, a couple of notebooks and a laptop, was empty. Also, one more thing to add. The room smelled different compared to the rest of the school...

"Apparently somebody liked showing off" Saeko speaks up as she walks into the room.

"Well, his bloated ego got him the safe, and that's something that benefited us in the end" I respond as i walk up to the safe.

"True. You said the password is Komuro's birthday right?" Saeko asks as she stops next to me and leans towards the safe.

"Yea... let me open it..." Saya responds as she also comes next to the safe, then kneels down and puts her hand on the wheel combination lock.

"You must really care about him if you still remember his birthday" Saeko glances at Saya before speaking up, causing the pink-haired girl to over flip the lock.

"I... I don't care about him!" She darts her head to Saeko...

"... All he did was ignore me, why would i care about him..." She says right after in a lower tone as she turns to look back at the lock.

(Well, you were kind of unbearable before the outbreak. I mean, in the anime you show up to a depressed Takashi, and out of all the things you could do to get closer to him what did you do?... Pester him...)

After that Saeko stayed quiet as Saya continued to fiddle with the lock combination... until... A metallic 'clank' and the thick safe door opened wide.

"Got it." Saya leans her head forward as she peers inside the now open safe.

Needless to say, both me and Saeko followed suit.

"Well, this is nice" Saya keeps looking inside the safe as she speaks...

The first thing i saw, being it was the biggest item in there... was the Mp5... under it, the vest that Kohta wore along with three slings, next to the vest was a folded map that had two flashlights, two walkie talkies and a textbook on top of it... and lastly...

"Huh, what is this?" Saya picks up a folded paper along with a key from inside the safe. She then unfolds the paper and tilts her head slightly.

"Samurais under the cabinet... uhh... what?" Saya tilts her head even more...

Not a second later, i heard shuffling behind me and to my left. Turning around i see Saeko flat on the ground with her left arm under the cabinet... And after a few seconds, she pulls her arm back out. Except this time, she also had her katana in her hand. She then gets up and dusts her self off...

"This, is definitely good" I say as i stare at Saeko.

She then walks up to me and hands me the bokken she was holding with the other hand, then bows slightly.

"Thank you for letting me borrow it" She says as she looks at me. I just responded with a slight nod.

"Ekhem!... So, other than this key, we know what everything else is for..." Saya makes an obviously fake throat-clearing sound, lifts her hand slightly and turns to look at the key in her hand...

"Actually, i know what this key is for." I say as i turn around to the small vault, kneel down and take the Mp5 and vest.

"It's the humvee's" I add up as i leave the Mp5 on the safe and then wear the vest.

"Huh, well this just increased our odds of survival a thousandfold, the Humvee is full of ammo and food" Saya ends up grinning slightly as she speaks.

"And the Scar-H." I add up as i grab the three slings, then put one on the Mp5 and 'wear' the second and third one.

"So, should we still look around the building?" Saeko asks as she draws the blade slightly as she looks at it.

"Yea, one thing does not cancel out the other, especially since this place is probably corpse free" I get up and turn to Saya as i speak.

"I will take the Scar-H after we reach the car, for now, i will use the bokken" I say as i hand her the sub-machinegun.

"So i'm the only one that will be doing nothing..." Saya takes the gun as she looks at me with one eyebrow raised.

"I can give you the bokken if you want" I respond as i fold my arms. Saya, just blinks a couple of times.

"J... jeez, I was just kidding." She then hugs the gun and pouts slightly as she looks at me.

"... Also, that textbook in there. It's the one you wrote, let's put it in the bag along with the map, flashlights and one radio, me or Saeko will hold on to the other one" I point at the safe as i speak.

Saya nods and kneels down, then takes off the bag, opens it and starts stuffing it with the stuff left inside the safe...

"... We wrote..." She whispers in a low tone as she glances at the notebook.

"What?" I ask.

"Nothing... are we done here?" She shakes her head and gets up. After wearing the sling with the Mp5, she passes the bag on one shoulder.

"Yea, don't see else anything worthy of note, let's check the other rooms" I nod as i take the second walk talky and pocket the car key. Before exiting the room, i also pass the bokken on my back between the vest and the jacket.

(We left some bags in the car, i will put it there once we get them, because this, is uncomfortable as fuck)

With that, we exit the room and head to the right, in the room a few meters away. The label 'Staff' on the door.

"Ok, let's start from here" I say glance at the girls, they both nod. I then turn to the door and slide it to the left...

The room was pretty much empty, the desks positioned in the corners as in to increase the space, to the right was a long counter that run from wall to wall with cupboards over it and under it. A sole red coffee maker was sitting on that counter, it's bowl was missing and it looked a bit... battered, and seeing how there were red paint

'scratches' on the floor a few meters away... yea somebody went Hulk on the poor thing... probably when the emp fell and it stopped working?

"What are you staring at that thing for" Saya asks as she brings her face closer to mine before looking at the coffee maker.

"Nothing, my eyes just stopped on it as it seems to be the only thing they left behind in here" I say as i turn my head to her.

"Anyway, let's check around" I add up as i walk inside the room...

The cupboards that were over the counter, the ones that were under the counter, the tables... nothing, everything was empty...

So, we exited this room and went to the right, towards the next door. The next room was a classroom, yet all the desks were gone, and once again, absolutely nothing in it.

After exiting that room we continued to the right until we found another door to our left, right before the end of the hallway we were on. It ended up being another classroom, in the exact state as the last one, completely empty...

Instead of exiting from the same door we entered, we then went straight ahead into the classroom and exited from the opposite direction, ending up on the hallway with the stairs...

We checked another couple of classrooms as we headed towards the stairs... all with the same outcome. Desks all gone and the rooms completely empty...

"Ughh... feels like the place has been picked clean..." Saya groans as we finally reached the stairs.

"We already got way more than we could hope for, i would not really mind if we found nothing" Saeko turns to look at the hallway behind us as she speaks.

"Yea, let's do a quick check on the floor below and after that, we will head to the car." I start walking down the stairs as i glance at the girls.

"How about taking a break here first? We have been walking non stop..." Saya folds her arms as she tilts her head slightly.

"A short one. Right now it must be around what? One? Two PM? We have to find a place to hide the car before sundown. I don't want to risk driving in the middle of the night." I stop on the stairs and turn around.

"... Uhh... right, and the only safe spot we know is the h... wait... drive?" Saya blinks at me a couple of times.

"... Uhh... yea, drive" I respond.

"Ohhhh, no. You, are not driving." Saya narrows her eyes and frowns as she looks at me.

"Saeko, can you drive?" I ask as i turn to her... she shakes her head.

"Can you?" I then turn to Saya... she just glances around with her arms still folded.

"And as my good ol mechanic J. Jones ain't answering his god damn phone again, that leaves me as the only person here that knows how to drive." I say as i lift both arms with a slight shrug.

"Who is not doing what now? Why are you talking stupid?" Saya narrows her eyes even more as her frown deepens. Saeko just tilted her head questionably without speaking.

(Of course they would not know about Gta... I mean,does it even actually exist here?...)

"Uhh... nothing, personal joke to my self... let's go" I respond as i turn around a start walking down the stairs.

"By the way, now that we have the map. When we take that break we should check it to see where that mansion is located at." I add up.

"On it" Saya responds as she starts walking down the stairs, followed by Saeko.

After reaching the first floor we then checked the first door to our left. It ended up being another classroom, this one had desks and chairs though. More importantly though, this room was full of plastic plates. Both on the desks and on the floor.

"They didn't clean up after themselves huh?" I say in a half-joking manner as i casually headed to the nearest table and checked the plates on it.

"Feels like there was a party in here" Saeko responds as she walks up next to me.

"Possible. Remember the people here got extracted, maybe they decided to let loose on rationing after they got confirmation that they will be getting out today" Saya adds up as she walks past us.

"They might have left something behind, let's check around" She says right after.

(Highly doubt they left anything behind, but it won't hurt to check)

With that, we spread out and start looking around the room...

And a couple of minutes later...

"I don't see any cooking utensils around here, how did they cook?" Saeko speaks up.

"Maybe they stoked up on edible things that didn't need to get cooked, like canned food" Saya replies as she nudges a plate off the table with her finger.

"Well there's nothing left here. Let's check the last few rooms on the first floor, after that we'll take a short break and check the map, then we'll head towards the car" I glance behind me as i speak, at the door that led to the hallway.

And few minutes later, we were out of the room. We then checked the two storage rooms next to us to our left.

Other than mops, buckets and empty bottles... the rooms were empty. After that, we checked the next door ahead of us and to our left, that one looked the same as the 'cafeteria', minus the plates. Lastly, we checked two of the rooms to our right, both classrooms, both empty.

"Uhh... i see no point searching any further, the place is obviously empty..." Saya groans as she folds her arms and turns to me.

"Yea, let's go to a room that has some desks and chairs, we will check the map there" I nod and turn around, then head towards the door that led to the hallway, the girls following behind me.

After exiting the room we were in, we went straight ahead and into the room ahead of us, the 'cafeteria' look alike room. We then sat around a desk and took the map out the bag and opened it... and instantly noticed a medium red circle in the middle of the central landmass...

"Huh... is that?"

"Senta 2-51-20" Saya cuts me off as she puts her finger on the circle, the address she just mentioned written on it.

"It's pretty far..." Saeko tilts her head slightly as she keeps looking at the map.

"At least we have five days until the extraction happens there, right?" I say as i turn to Saeko.

"With the car, it's more than possible. It might be far, but we crossed more distance in less time the last couple of days" Saya responds.

"In other words, we need to make sure we get to the car." I add up.

"It was still on the other side of the bridge last time we passed" Saeko turns to me as she speaks.

"Uhh, how are we going to pass it? The rope snapped..." Saya puts her elbows on the desk and places her cheeks against her hands.

"I jumped to the other side of the bridge once, i can do it again. Saeko, you think you can manage that as well?" I respond as i turn to Saeko, she nods after thinking for a bit.

"Yea, but i can't. If you didn't realize it yet" Saya frowns slightly as she speaks.

"That's why you'll go swimming" I respond. Saya just... blinks at me.

"I will take your bag and guns so you don't have to wor..."

"Hold on a second!" Saya cuts me off as she raises her voice.

"You expect me to just dive into the river from the damn street?!" She adds up.

"There should be a ladder around there somewhere, you can use it to go down, then drift to the ladder on the other side of the bridge, i did see one while we were going down with the car. Jumping over the bridge, unless you are a hundred and ten percent sure that you will succeed, it's a no go. Falling from that height could be fatal" I respond.

"This is stupid..." She groans as she folds her arms and looks away...

"You want me to come with you?" I respond. Saya darts her head to me and frowns.

"I don't mind going to the river with you if you want that, Saeko can take the bags" I add up as glance at Saeko before looking back at Saya.

"... Idiot, i just don't want to get wet again. I can handle it just fine" She responds with a slight pout...

(Jeez)

"So... that's the plan then, me and Saeko jump over the bridge, Saya goes swimming. After that, we get in the car and then see where we go from there" Both Saeko and Saya nod... the latter with a slight pout still on her face...

"This is going to be the third time today that I'm going to get wet because of you..." Saya groans as she folds her arms...

"You're going to get what because of who now?" I respond as i tilt my head slightly.

"What, are you deaf now as well? I said I'm going to get we..." Saya then stops in the middle of her sentence... blinks a couple of times... and then her face goes a deep red. She then glances at Saeko, who was hunching slightly forward. Her head lowered with her hand over her mouth as she kept staring at the floor to her right, i think her cheeks were also slightly flushed...

"W... what are you making me say you pervert!" Saya shouts as she grabs the bag next to her, hugs it, and leans forward on her seat as she glares at me.

"I didn't 'make' you say anything. That was all you" I respond with a slight grin.

Saya darts her head away and starts mumbling while still hugging the bag... and then, silence...

"Uhh... ok so, before things get even more awkward. Let's prepare to head towards the car." I slowly get up from my chair as i speak.

(Funny stuff aside, we have five days to reach that mansion. It might seem much, but i'd rather not risk losing the car)

Your driver's license please

"This is ridiculous..." Saya groans as she keeps staring at the ladder that led down to the river.

"If you have another plan in mind I'm all ears Saya. I'm going blind as much as the other guy here." I respond as I fold my arms and lean over the railing, looking at the river below...

Thankfully, after leaving the school we were able to reach the bridge without any real problems. Sadly we didn't find anything else that might be even remotely useful though. I mean, even the cop car we found at the barricade was empty in the end, as we opened it up on our way down.

"Can't we just lower the stupid bridge?" Saya responds with a slight whine.

"I have no idea how these bridges work, all I know is, that they're supposed to have some sort of booth-like structure that should have a control console in it. Something that I can't even see around here to be honest" I respond as I turn to look at the bridge that was a little further off to our left.

"... Ughh. Fine, fine. Let's get this over with, all I have to do is drift to the other side..." Saya then closes her eyes and folds her arms. She then takes off the gun and bag before handing them to me.

"Actually, There's... one more thing..." I respond as I bring my hand to the back of my neck, causing Saya to frown.

"What? Do I have to go in my underwear so my clothes don't get wet?" She responds sarcastically as she narrows her eyes, the frown still on her face.

"Uhh... well, there are corpses on the other side. We won't have time to wait for you to dry up. I was thinking something along the lines of

changing to clothes we have in the bag... but if you want to go in your underwear then do a..."

Before I could even finish, Saya had already snatched the bag back.

"Pervert..." She whispers in a low tone as she opens it.

"Hey, I'm just trying to figure out a way to avoid turning the car in a soggy mess without having to wait next to a group of corpses, plus, staying in wet clothes will make your movement more audible and weight you down" I respond as I wear the Mp5's sling.

"I get it idiot. You don't have to get so self-justifying" Saya groans as she takes a pair of trousers, a shirt and boxers out of the bag.

"I have my older clothes in the Humvee, can't I just stay in these and then change to the ones I have in the car?" She asks as she looks at the clothes she just picked.

"Too risky, You will have to change outside the Humvee as changing inside will still get the car drenched and outside of the Humvee, we have corpses within arms reach" I respond as I tilt my head slightly.

"... Turn around..." She then glances at me as she throws me the bag, keeping the cargo pants shirt and boxers.

"Boxers?" I ask as I do as she asks.

"W..well what's the point of changing clothes if my underwear gets wet. B..but don't get funny ideas! If you even dare to peek I will toss you into the river! And this time won't save you!..." Saya finishes her sentence in a slightly higher tone.

(I thought it was Saeko that carried me?...)

I shake my head slightly and turn to look at Saeko, who was now in front of me. She just smiled and tilted her head slightly.

"You sure you can do the jump? Or it might be better if you went by the river as well?" I ask as I start hearing shuffling behind me.

"I can handle it. Except, if you 'want' me to go to the river" Saeko glanced at Saya as she spoke, then looked back at me.

"... No, do as you wish." I respond as I turn to look at the bridge.

(Ughh, that answer gave me all the wrong ideas...)

"I'm... done." I then hear a rather meek voice behind me.

Turning around I see Saya with a slightly flustered face, hugging her folded clothes. Saying that she was wearing the exact same stuff as the last time she had to change is, kind of a trap question. As all my clothes are the same after all. So, she was once again, in a black shirt and black cargo pants.

"Quit staring at me idiot, your clothes didn't fit me before and they don't fit me now either." Saya glares at me as she tightens her hug on her folded clothes.

(Of course they frigging don't.)

"Right, let's put your clothes in the bag and get this over with, you can change on the other side" I say as I take a step forward and extend my arm. Saya nods and reluctantly hands me her clothes, shoes and extras included.

(Call me a pervert, but did she 'have' to place her underwear on the top?... Thank god for the mask...)

Acting as casual as possible, I take her clothes and put them in the bag.

"Ok, let's go" I say as I turn around and start walking towards the bridge, Saeko responds with a nod before also turning around to follow me...

By the time we reached the bridge, Saya was already off the street. Probably on the ladder... But enough about Saya, we had our own 'problems' to deal with. More precisely.

"The rope is a bit high up..." Saeko looks up to the hanging rope as she speaks, and she was not wrong, it must have been at least three meters over our heads...

(Hmm the corpses I shot are still here, we could probably stack em up... or one of us can leg up the to other)

"We could..."

Before I could even start speaking, Saeko sprinted straight towards the bridge, wall ran a couple of steps up, and grabbed the rope...

"Do that..." I finish my sentence as I tilt my head.

Saeko then turns her upper body around and extends her arm to me.

(Ehh, whatever this works too)

I then also do the same before taking Saeko's hand with my right hand and grabbing the rope that was hanging under her with my left.

"I got it, move up" I say as I let go of her hand. She nods and turns her upper body around, then starts climbing up...

(... She does know that her skirt is a bit... 'too' short for this... right?)

I turn my head slightly to the left, towards where Saya should be at as I start climbing. Saying that I didn't get a good 'glimpse' though, would be a lie.

After reaching the top of this side of the bridge we both stop for a bit to look at the other side.

(The other part of the rope is still there. But, I'm actually aiming to land on the scaffolding. Just like last time)

I then turn to glance at my right. This time, I could actually see Saya on the ladder. She was on the last step, her feet already touching the water.

"Are you ready?" Saeko then puts her hand on my left shoulder, causing me to shake my head slightly and turn to her.

"Yea, I'll go first this time around" I respond, she replies with a silent nod.

(Focus, what we have to do is far more dangerous than what Saya has to do, and this time, I have no rope to hold me in case I fail. Ughh, come on, quick shooting yourself in the foot, you did it once, you can do it again. Just get a better landing this time around)

With a slight nod, I lean forward until I start to slowly fall. I then bend my knees, and jump.

After 'flying' in an ark for about two to three seconds, I land on the scaffolding of the other side of the bridge. This time without pulling any arm.

(Ok, done and done)

I climb up a few metal beams until I reach the rope, then turn to look at Saeko. The moment she saw me looking at her she nodded and jumped. Without even batting an eyelash... and... she actually ended up landing higher than my initial position on the scaffolding.

"All good?" I ask as I turn to her. She just nods as she lifts her head to look at me.

I then turn to look up, before starting to climb using the rope...

Reaching the top didn't take too long after that, and once I did get to the top I balanced myself and looked towards the Humvee that was ahead of me, in the middle of the street.

(Corpses are still surrounding it, hmm, one bullet should still be enough though.)

I then look below us, at the bridge's bottom.

(And it's still clear)

And finally, I look towards Saya. Who was still on the ladder, with her lower body now underwater. From what I could see, she was looking towards us. One of her hands holding the ladder, the other trying to hold her twintails out of the river.

(Can she see me?)

I raised my hand and waved at her, and a few seconds after that, she let go of the ladder.

"Ok, let's go next to the ladder on this side" I bring the rope up and toss it over the other side of the bridge as I speak. Then, using the rope we quickly climbed down, again jumping off as the rope was once again shorter than the bridge's height.

After landing, and while still facing the bridge, we ran to the left side. Towards the same sidewalk I was on when I scanned the location for a way to get on to the other side.

"Help Saya, I will keep guard." I turn to Saeko as I speak, she nods and runs to the ladder. Gets on it and disappears from my vision.

(Ok, next step, We shoot a gun, get to the car, and get the fuck out of here)

While thinking, I looked around me.

(I can see some corpses on both the sidewalk we are on and on the one after the road. They are pretty far away though, so it should be fine. Most corpses here after all, are next to the car. Hmm, yea, we can probably shoot a gun safely if we move fast after that. So after Saya changes, we will do that)

"Ughhhh... why must the river be so damn cold" I then hear a whining voice behind me, turning around, I see Saya staring at me. She was shaking slightly and with her arms were folded as she hunched forward.

I take the bag off and give it to Saeko.

"There should be a jacket in there too." I say as I turn around again, looking away from the two girls.

"I..if I catch a cold, It's going to be completely your fault" I hear the same whining voice once again.

"Then I'll go to the nearest pharmacy to get you medicine" I respond.

"We already have medicine in the car idiot" Saya replies with a groan.

"Fine, then I'll spoon feed you till you get better." I say as I raise both arms and shake my head slightly...

"A..I..it'll still be your fault.." I hear Saya reply, albeit this time with much less 'oomph'...

We then stayed quiet for a bit... until...

"Would you also take care of me if I got sick?" I hear a different voice ask, and since there are only three of us here.

"If you wanted me to. Though Saeko, if your immune system is half as badass as you are, then I'll probably end up sick before you do." I answer.

"Hmm, you have the wrong image of me Naier, I'm not a superhuman, in more ways than one" Saeko replies.

"Well, I better find me two spoons then, just in case..." I respond with a slight chuckle in a low tone. And after some more shuffling...

"What do I do with these?" Saya asks.

"If you mean my clothes, throw them. We're not waiting here, that was the whole point" I respond.

"Ok. Let's go then" Saya answers a few seconds later.

"Alright, come on" I motion with my head towards the bridge without turning to look at them, taking the MP5 off in the process.

"So, how will we do this?" Saya asks after coming next to me.

"We will pick one side of the bridge, somebody will take the gun and go to the other side, then fire a single shot and return. The moment we see an opening, we will head to the car as fast as we can, as the shot will make the corpses from both the sidewalks that are next to the bridge to crawl up to us" I respond.

"Who will take the shot?" Saeko asks next.

"Either you or Saya, we won't be in a rush until we fire, so it's a good moment for one of the two of you to take the shot." I answer.

"I'll go. I have not shot once ever since you showed me how to do so. And, this is supposed to be the gun that I am using." Saya instantly walks up to me and extends her arm.

By now, we were past the middle of the bridge and towards the right side. I stopped, and gave the MP5 to Saya.

"Go to the side we came from, me and Saeko will head to the other side. The safety is on, so remember to switch it, but more importantly, switch it back on after you take the shot." I say as I give the submachine gun to Saya.

"Ok..." She nods slightly as her eyes focus on the gun.

(I expected some sort of cranky remark, is she getting anxious?)

"You will do just fine, relax. Just shoot then run back to us" I say right after.

"O..of course I'll do fine, I'm a genius, not an idiot" She narrows her eyes slightly as she lifts her head to look at me.

(And there's that cranky remark)

"Right, Saeko, let's go" I nod, turn around and start moving towards the other side of the bridge, Saeko walking next to me...

After reaching the end of the road we stop and turn around to look towards Saya. Who, after running to the other side of the road, also turns to look at us. I then make a thumbs-up motion to which she nods, before turning to look towards the corpses that surrounded the car. She then lifts the gun, puts it against her shoulder and places her cheek on the stock...

"When we find a place to stay. I hope it will then be my turn for one of your lessons" Saeko whispers to my ear...

(Oh holy?! When did she...)

I must have been really focused on Saya, as I didn't realize that Saeko had crept up on me... again...

"Don't worry, I didn't forget" I respond as I turn to look at her.

(Her face, is way too close)

She then nods, and backs away... and right that moment. A single shot echoed.

I turn my head to Saya, to find her fiddling with the gun. But more importantly, not moving an inch...

(What is she doing?)

"Wait here, keep an eye on the corpses behind us." I say as I glance at Saeko, then run to Saya.

"What are you doing, move." I speak up the moment I reach her.

"The stupid gun is stuck. The hole where the bullets come out from is not closing completely. I didn't do anything, I just pressed the trigger" She responds as she turns to look at me.

"It jammed? Uhh, I'll fix it in the car, no time now. Come on, move." I say as I put my hand on her back and softly push her.

"Ok, you don't have to push me." She responds with a slight groan before she starts running towards Saeko...

And the moment all of us gathered at the side of the road I turned to look at the car.

(Good, corpses are already moving to our right)

Then look at the sidewalk to my left.

(And so are these chumps... it won't be more than a minute before they are on top of us)

"Naier" Saeko speaks up while also looking at the corpses on the sidewalk to our left.

"I know, we'll move before they close in too much." I respond, Saeko nods before turning to look at the Humvee, her hand hovering over the blade's hilt.

I spent the next couple of seconds darting my head between the Humvee and the oncoming corpses on our left... until.

"Ok, no more time left. Move." I whisper as I start moving forward.

And like that, we silently started moving. Our path was to go straight, then upon getting near the Humvee's hood, turn right in order to end

up on the humvee's right side. As there were still a couple of corpses 'stuck' on the left and back side of the car. Guess Saya's shot was a bit too far to the right, causing the corpses on the left side of the car to get stuck by trying to walk into the car. Well, Saeko could probably handle them with ease, but I don't see the need if we can just get inside without doing so. Also, as the car was looking towards the bridge meant I had to turn it around.

The moment we got near the car, I slowed down, raised my hand and pointed to my right, then glanced behind me at the two girls. After seeing both of them nod I turn to look ahead again.

(Ok, I will first unlock the back door, then the front. I... did take the key with me, right?)

Probably because of my past experiences with this certain key, I felt a shiver run up my spine as I dug through my pocket... thankfully, the key was indeed there.

(God I need to stop scaring myself)

I slowly creep to the right side of the car and to the back door. Unlock it, and open it. Then turn around and motion the girls to get inside. After that, I moved aside for the girls to pass before heading towards the front door. And after unlocking that one too, I opened it and got inside.

"Close your door" I say the moment I sit in the driver seat.

"Alright" Saya responds before slamming the door shut, followed right after by me closing mine.

"Ok... here we go" I let out a slight sigh as I insert the key into the ignition switch, and turn the key...

The car shakes for half a second, and the engine comes alive, signaling the surrounding corpses to turn around.

"Nice. So, straight ahead and into the river?" I turn around and 'ask' with a deadpan voice...

"You, are retarded." Saya responds with one hell of a frown as she folds her arms.

(Heh, should have expected as much)

"Wear your seatbelts" I say as I turn to look at the parking brake and the two levers on the shifter.

(Huh? She has the car on HL? Hmm... if I remember correctly. H is for street, HL for places with poor traction, L for hardcore off-road and N is for... uhh... what was N for again?...)

"What are you waiting for? Let's go!" Saya shouts behind me.

(Right)

I release the parking brake, bring the central lever to H and then the rightmost lever from N to D.

(Hmm, this shifter does not have a P... then again, we do have a parking brake as a different lever)

I shake my head slightly and turn to look ahead. The corpses had by now closed in to the car... So before starting, I changed the rightmost lever to D2 for good measure. Then, I stepped on the gas.

The car starts moving forward with a loud roar, making a couple of corpses disappear under the hood. I then keep moving forward, straight towards the bridge.

"Where exactly are you going idiot? You know we can't pass the bridge right?" Saya 'asks'.

Glancing behind me I see her leaning between the two front seats...

"Last warning, your seatbelt." I respond, causing Saya to turn to me with one mean-ass frown...

(Suit yourself)

I stop the car, change the shifter to R, then press on the gas again. This time harder, and as the car started picking up speed in reverse, I made a sharp turn by turning the steering wheel to the right, causing the car to 'spin'. Halfway through that spin, I release the pedal and change the lever to D. And the moment the car had made a hundred and eighty-degree turn, I straightened the steering wheel and pressed on the gas again.

The corpses that were behind the car, were now in front of it, and two seconds later. Under and over it... did I mention that I think I heard somebody yelp while all that happened?

I look up to the rearview mirror... that didn't exist...

(Right, the Humvee doesn't have a back window, no point having a mirror there)

With that thought, I slow down the car to a crawl and turn to look behind me...

Saeko... was just staring at me. Saya on the other hand, was laying straight flat down. Her face on Saeko's legs, one of her hands holding the door next to Saeko, and her legs 'on' her seat.

"Don't say I didn't tell you to wear a seatbelt." I say as I try to hold back a chuckle.

"Ughhh, I hate you..." Saya groans as she slowly gets up. I just shake my head slightly and turn to look at the road ahead.

"I will drive ahead for a bit, until we find somewhere quiet to park. Then, we'll see where to go from there" I respond as I slowly press on the gas again...

(Ok, so... we are on the central landmass once again, the same location that the mansion mentioned in the group's notes is at. Now, we have five days for it, that much time 'should' be enough to go there without needing to rush now that we have the car. So for today, I think it's going to be better if we find a place to take an actual break on this landmass...)

I kept my eyes on the road as I kept thinking...

(So, what should our next destination be?)

"Hey... what should I do with the stuck gun?" Saya speaks up after a couple of minutes of silence.

"Right, take off the magazine and give it to me, can't risk having it misfire in the car. After we find a place to stop I will show both of you how to un-jam a gun" I respond as I bring my right hand between the two front seats without turning to look at the girls.

Without hearing an answer, I then felt something being placed on my hand. Bringing my arm back forward, I looked at the MP5 that was now in my hand, without its magazine.

(Ok, let's see what's wrong with you)

I pressed on the brakes and stopped the car to a crawl, then checked the MP5's ejection port...

The bolt head was partly visible. Normally, that part should be completely hidden inside the front part of the receiver, and the bolt carrier, which is the white/gray metallic part you normally see at the ejection port, was a little further back from where it should be.

(I can't see a bullet. But with the way it got stuck, there should be one jammed between the magazine well and the chamber)

I then grab the cocking lever and pull it back completely, until both the bolt carrier and head are hidden on the back part of the receiver.

And then, I managed to see the jammed bullet, now that the whole contraption was out of the way. I nod slightly, and after 'locking' the cocking lever by pulling it back and up, I give it a hard slap, causing the whole thing to fly forward. This time, taking the bullet normally inside the chamber. Before handing the gun back to Saya I pull the cocking lever back one more time and eject the bullet.

"There are a lot of ways a gun can jam, this was one of em, the next bullet in the magazine got stuck midway. Thankfully, all the jams have the same'ish way of un-jamming so explaining one will do for almost all. Put the extra bullet back in the magazine, but don't load the gun. Big chance it will need cleaning, the most common reason a normally functioning gun can get stuck while moving a bullet from the mag to the chamber is excess gunpowder, or overall dirt in the feed ramp... as the other reasons can be faulty magazines, or bad reloading, among other things. If the gun was used by an officer that was armed like a juggernaut, I don't expect it to be faulty. And you were not manually reloading the gun when it got stuck... Or it might be a bad spring which means we were screwed as we got no replacement parts" I turn to look at Saya as I hand her the now un-jammed gun and bullet.

"O..k" Saya just nods at me and takes both items... glancing around as if she was lost...

(... I just went Kohta mode, didn't I ?)

"Uhh. Also, if possible, somebody check the map, tell me in comparison to the Mansion we need to head to, which 'safe' location we already know is the nearest, or is in our way. The house we stayed at before going to the island, the convenience store, you get the idea" I add up as I look at the two girls. Saeko glances at Saya, who was now staring at the gun.

"I will do it" She then answers as she takes the map that was next to Saya's seat.

"Ok, tell me when, or if, you find something" I respond as I nod, then turn to look ahead and start driving once more.

And like that, we started moving again. While avoiding pure bullshit roads, I tried to keep going straight for as long as I could, while keeping my overall sleep low. That way we would be able to find our location without too much of a hassle...

And after some time has passed...

"Ok... I think I'm done" Saeko speaks up.

"The mansion, as marked on the map, is on the leftmost part of the central landmass, and looking at the landmass's height, it's also about eight tenths from the bottom to the top. The mall we were in is actually near the Mansion..."

"We can't go there, it's overrun, but... does that mean that it's also near the house that we stayed in? The one that we... slept in..."
Saya cuts Saeko off, and then trails off...

"I know the mall is overrun, and sadly, no. The mansion is actually 'closer' to the police station and the convenience store, rather than that house. As in order to go there, we will have to go over the Mansion's position in height, and then we will have to go back down. The convenience store is actually closer than the house concerning the height position" Saeko responds.

"And it should be closer to us too, the convenience store I mean." I add up.

"Ughh... so we are sleeping in sleeping bags again?" Saya groans.

"Looks like it" Saeko responds.

"Huhhh, I real... wait... That place has no bathroom!" Saya's eyes went wide the moment the realization dawned on her.

"... We are going to the house." She then adds up, or more likely, commands.

"It's too far" I answer.

"I don't care! I want to take a normal bath in a normal bathroom!" Saya shouts back.

"You 'will' get a bathroom... just not a 'normal' one" I respond.

"The smelly toilets in that place are Not a bathroom! That place doesn't even have a tub!" Saya shouts again.

"I was not talking about them though, Saeko, does that map show any supermarkets?" I ask as I keep driving.

"Umm, only the big ones like the mall. Can I ask why?" She responds.

"The summer season was near, that means most big or medium supermarkets would have their summer gear out for sale, so, we can just 'make' a bathtub from a hard plastic indoors swimming pool. The water still runs, we can fill it up from the faucet in the toilets. With either a long hose or a bucket." I respond.

"That is so stupid in so many ways..." Saya groans.

"Hmm, I think it's a good idea, it will be like a mobile bathtub" Saeko responds.

"Well Saya, if you have another idea, I'm all ears. That's not going to take us to the other side of the continent obviously." I add up as I tilt my head slightly.

"Ughh... f..fine. I still think it's stupid though" Saya caves in and agrees with a groan as she turns to look out of the window as she folds her arms.

"Alright, so. Next target before we go to the convenience store is a supermarket. And, as I asked, are there any supermarkets near us?"

"Hmm, well..." Saeko turns to look at the map... and then, silence...

"I know one that is near the convenience store..." Saya speaks up after glancing at Saeko.

"You do? How come, don't you live like, far away from here?" I ask.

"Uhh, well I..." Saya stops in the middle of her sentence and starts glancing around...

"I just do! What does it even matter..." She responds as she darts her head to the window with a pout.

(... Didn't Takashi live around the convenience store?... Hmm, yea I'm pretty sure he did. Uhh, so her 'hidden' crush goes all the way to learning the neighborhood around his house? Jeez, what is she? A stalker?)

"W..what are you being so silent for, say something idiot!" Saya blurts out after a couple of seconds of silence.

"Well, you know da way, so I'm waiting for your input here" I respond.

"F..fine, I'm coming to the front seats to tell you where to go. Can I have the map?" I felt my seat 'move' as Saya spoke, and after some surfing behind me, I saw her popping up to my right, between the two seats.

"You know I can just stop the car for you to come to the front normally..." I say as I glance at her.

"I can do this just fine." Saya responds as she tries to balance herself as she shakily tries to move to the front.

(Not if I make a sharp turn you won't... but then I won't hear the end of it)

I hold myself back from chuckling, otherwise, I'd have one angry hamster... I mean Saya, after me.

"Uff... see, told you it's fine" After finally sitting on the passenger seat, Saya turns to glance at me before looking back at the map.

"So, where are we?" She asks right after.

"I have not taken a single turn other than the first right turn I took after we left the bridge." I respond.

"Ok... uhh... the bridge was. Here, so we should be around... here" She points at the map, somewhere around the coastline on the right part of the central map. She then turns to look out of the window.

"Ok, keep going straight, there should be a small bridge that goes over a stream later ahead, from there, I will tell you where to go" Saya nods as she keeps looking between the map and the outside.

"Got it." I respond.

"And after we reach the supermarket? What then?" Saeko asks right after.

"Hmm, one of the three of us will stay to watch the car, the other two will head inside to get what we need. Or, if we find a place to hide the car, we will all go inside. After seeing how many corpses are strolling there obviously. Oh, and since you are on the back seats. If it's possible, can you check for two more bags and the Scar-H?" I answer.

"Umm, the Scar-H is?" Saeko asks back.

"A gun, bigger than the MP5. orange or rather, beige looking." I respond as I glance at her.

"Alright." Saeko nods and turns to look at the bags in the back of the car.

"By the way, the watch. You two don't have it right?" I ask as I keep looking at the street.

"No, Rei's mom was the one who had it" Saeko responds.

"And they didn't leave it behind" Saya adds up.

"The supermarket might have clocks that are not completely digital" Saeko keeps looking through the bags as she speaks.

"Yea, Saya you said you found batteries from the mall right?" I ask again.

"I did, there should be inside a side pocket in the duffle bag with the gas canisters" Saya nods at me and turns to glance at the bags.

"Should we take some with us?" Saeko asks as she turns to us.

"Yea, a couple. To check any electronic devices that we might find, though if we are lucky, we might find more batteries in there... if we can go inside that is" I respond as I tilt my head.

"Uhh, if we could just find an ice maker that works with batteries. I'd kill for a cold bottle of water right now" Saya lets out a sigh as she speaks.

"Well if we find one, we can take it" I respond.

"No you idiot, an ice maker draws too much energy, there are no battery-powered ice makers" Saya responds with a groan.

"Solar panels, car-sized batteries and a converter then" I answer as I ignore Saya's remark.

"Yea... if we can just find that stuff. Setting up will be the easy part, as I have written down how to do so in the textbook" Saya nods slightly as she keeps looking at the map.

"Well, that. Or going to the island with the working generator" I respond casually.

"W..we are not going back there!" Saya instantly shouts.

"Huh, why?" I 'ask' as I turn to glance at her, her face being as pink as her hair.

"J..just because you pervert!" She shouts back.

"Hey, what 'you' saw. Does not make 'me', a pervert... then again, I don't even remember what I saw in the first place in order to have an opinion" I respond as I glance at her.

"Yea, yea, nice excuse. Of course you would say you 'don't' remember. Everybody had about the same type of hallucination, what makes you so special to have something 'different' and then by 'chance' you also, don't remember... A..and I didn't see anything!" Saya responds as she frowns and folds her arms.

"First you tell me all of you saw the same thing, then you tell me you saw nothing?... Anyway, the only thing I remember seeing was a..." As I kept speaking... I felt something tickling my nose...

"A, FACHOO!" And I end up sneezing as I turn my head away from Saya and press on the breaks.

"Hey! You're lucky you are wearing that mask idiot!" Saya frowns even more as she shouts.

"Sorry, couldn't let go of the wheel, might have ended up in a wall..." I respond as I shake my head.

"As I was saying. The only thing I remember is the cave." I shrug slightly as I finish my sentence.

"But, that doesn't mean that what you saw, and don't remember was... different from what the rest of us saw..." I hear another voice speak up from the back of the car...

(You in on this too now Saeko?)

"Uhh... I can't..." I stop for a second.

"Deny that" Then continue...

"Pervert" Saya responds in a low tone as she folds her arms and turns to look at the road ahead.

"Hey, I said I can't deny it, I didn't say I accept or like it" I respond as I narrow my eyes...

And after a few seconds of silence...

"So the idea of you seeing 'us' like that. Displeases you?" Saeko, 'asks'... and both she and Saya turn silent. While I could not see Saeko as she was on the back seats and we had no rearview mirror, Saya was now constantly glancing at me, her arms still folded and her head slightly lowered.

(God... damn it Saeko. Way to use my words against me... You know what, fine... let's play ball)

"No, it doesn't" I answer flatly.

"P... pp..pervert " Saya ended up tripping in her own word multiple times before turning to look at the window next to her, 'hugging' herself even tighter as she looked away from me. Saeko... didn't respond.

"What? Didn't like my answer after all?" I ask as I let go of the gas and turn my head slightly to the right, trying to look behind me.

Saeko closes her eyes and smiles as she puts her hand behind her neck, then runs her hand under her long hair.

"I am sure that, you already know the answer to that, Naier..." Saeko responds as she opens her eyes, the smile still on her face...

"Aaaa, anyway! T... the street, focus on t..t..the street idiot!
B..bridge! Look for the stupid damn b,bridge! " Saya shouts after a few seconds as she starts pointing her index finger all over the place, her face even redder than before...

(Holy shit, Saya is actually freaking out here...)

"Right" I respond as I look back ahead and press on the gas again.

(And, she is not wrong... I do know the answer, ever since the clinic.
Or at least, I hope I do.)

It's a supermarket

About fifteen minutes had passed since we successfully found the bridge that Saya mentioned. From there, we took a turn to the left and kept going straight. Or well, we tried to go straight, but the road ended up being blocked. So we instead took a right turn before turning left again two intersections later.

(Based on Saya's information, the supermarket is next to the stream. It's three floors in height, yet the structure itself is not supposed to be very big, about two medium- to small sized houses in width and three to three and a half in length... or, from the way she explained it, I'd say about twenty to thirty meters in width and fifty to sixty in length. Not too big, but not small either...)

"Turn left here, it should be around here..." Saya cuts off my thought as she points towards the left, her eyes staying focused on the map.

"I just hope that place ain't a corpse hangout" I respond as I slow down the car and take the turn she just mentioned.

"Hey, you asked me for a supermarket, so I'm telling you where to find one. It's not my fault if it's overrun" Saya responds as she turns to me with a slight frown...

"Of course it's not, or are you the one responsible for this outbreak?" I ask as I glance at her and raise an eyebrow.

"I'm not even going to answer a question that's that stupid... keep your eyes on the road..." She answers as she groans slightly before turning to look back at the map.

I just laugh through my nose and turn to look back at the street...

And as I kept going forward, I noticed a different building in the distance, one that was visibly bigger than the ones around it. It also seemed to have some open space next to it.

"Hmm... The building also has a blue roof if I remember correctly" Saya adds up as she keeps looking at the map.

"In that case, I think we found it" I respond as I keep looking at the building in the distance.

Saya lifts her head to my response, then leans toward me as she keeps looking through the front windshield. She narrowed her eyes and kept staring at the building as it slowly grew in size the closer we got to it... until...

"Yea, that's the one" She responds with a slight nod before leaning back on her seat.

"Ok. Let's see how bad things are over there." I shut down the engine and let the car roll to a stop. While that was happening, I turned to Saeko.

"Did you find any binoculars while looking at the stuff back there?" I ask, Saeko shakes her head.

"No, the only set we had. I think Kohta had it on him" She responds.

"Hmm, and the Mp5 and Scar H don't have the level of zoom we need, they lack any type of magnification attachment" I put my hand on the back of my neck as I turn to look at the street ahead.

By now, we were close enough to have a clear view of the building and its parking field...

"We can just check it on foot, can't we? I don't see any corpses roaming outside, only a couple that are laying on the ground" Saeko responds as she leans between the two front seats.

"That is why I 'don't' want to check it on foot" I answer as I shake my head. Causing Saeko to turn her head towards me with a questioning look.

"The lack of corpses means it might have survivors inside..." Saya adds up as she folds her arms.

"Exactly. And if it has survivors that are able to keep the nearby location clear of corpses, it might also mean that they are armed. Of course, the ones on the ground might also be leftovers from the unlucky humans that were here when the outbreak first started. Or, They might be 'alive' corpses, waiting for somebody to pass... but I don't want to risk going there on foot. If that place has survivors, who knows if they're friendly or not." I fold my arms as I keep speaking.

"And I suppose using the car is a no go as well? As you didn't even mention it." Saya asks a few seconds later.

"Look around us, driving there, even if I shut the engine before we get 'too close', will make everything crawl up to the field around the store. Plus, if it has survivors that are hostile, they will see us before we see them. Point is null, we still get jumped on" I respond as I shake my head.

"Well we'll have to take a risk then, there are no other shops that are this big around here." Saya closes her eyes and pushes her glasses with her index finger before turning to look at me...

"I can go check it." Saeko speaks up.

"Out of the question, I'm not letting you go there by yourself. Uhh, We'll just do it with the safest method available" I respond as I glance at Saeko. Then knock on the front windshield.

"We will drive up the front door with the Humvee. While this thing is not an 'up-armored' version. The glass it has is thick, so I suspect it's at least partially protected.

Stores like that one have glass front doors. We can check it to see if it's barricaded, along with seeing how the insides look. That obviously means that we'll be putting ourselves on a timer though, as we'll go with the engine running, in case we need to bail." I add up.

"So, we just drive up there after all?" Saya asks right after as she tilts her head and raises an eyebrow.

"Yes, but we need to make up the plans on how we will act right now" As I finished speaking, we heard a single 'thud' from the backside of the Humvee.

"They reached the car?" Saeko asks as she turns to look behind her.

"Doesn't matter, we are going to move forward, not in reverse. And they ain't getting through the trunk, except if they can somehow claw through steel." I answer.

"I see, sorry for interrupting you" Saeko responds as she turns to me and nods.

(You know, I've noticed that Saeko is usually very polite, is it because of her upbringing? Or because of her years-old 'act'?)

"Naier?" Saeko, probably due to my silence, speaks up again.

"It's alright. So, as I was saying, we need to make up the plan on how we will act right now. That being, if it's inhabited, if it's overrun, or if it's completely abandoned" I respond as I nod.

"Well, obviously if it's inhabited we should high tail it as fast as we can. Even if they aren't hostile, the people there will see the car and what it has inside. While I don't want to attack them if they won't pick a fight, I'm not about to start handing off our supplies to every single random Joe." Saya speaks up as she folds her arms under her chest.

"Agreed on that." I nod.

"True, I find such a decision to be the best for us as well." Saeko adds up.

"If it's abandoned, or overrun... We can block the front door with the car and all of us go inside. That way once we return, we can instantly

go to the car without having to deal with the probably infested road by then. So we won't have to worry about the ones outside like that. Only the ones inside, if it's overrun that is." Saya starts speaking again as she lowers her head slightly and closes her eyes.

"Hmm, good call, except for one thing" I responded, causing Saya to open her eyes and look at me.

"We can't leave the car unattended while it'll be in full view. And, if the insides have corpses, then the one on the car can snipe them off while staying inside the hatch. For one, Corpses can't climb up the Humvee so they will be safe to shoot, and second, we don't know in what position we'll be when returning. We might end up having to shoot corpses with the Humvee being behind them. And I don't want to find out whether this Humvee can withstand bullets by shooting at it." I tap on the car's steering wheel as I continue speaking...

"... Uhh... you have a point. So who..."

"I don't know how to use a gun, there will be no point if I stay in the car" Saeko cuts Saya off as she turns to me, much to Saya's frowning dismay.

"You have a point." I say as I glance at her, then turn to stare at Saya. She looks at me, then at Saeko, then back at me.

"Yea fine ok, So me and Saeko will..."

"You are staying in the car." It was I that cut Saya off this time, much to her even bigger frowning dismay.

"No I'm not, I can't drive and you are a better shot than me." She responds with a frown.

"You won't have to drive, worse case you will have to shoot, but without the danger of them reaching you, it's actually the reason why you 'should' shoot instead of me. Also there are two more things I want you to do, and one of em, only you can really do" I respond.

Saya stayed quiet as she stared at me, the frown, or more like, the pout still being obvious on her face.

(Also, you're not exactly frontline fighter material)

"First, I need you to mark any locations you remember on the map, gas stations, other stores that might have things we could use, stuff like that" I point at the map on her lap as I speak.

"And what makes you think I remember this area so well idiot?" Saya responds as she narrows her eyes.

"You knew about the supermarket, but yea, I understand. In that case, if you can't remember anything it's fine, just do the second thing then. Set up our night lookout location, and shifts" I nod slightly as I keep speaking... only to see both Saeko and Saya staring at me with a blank stare...

"What. Just because 'we' go to sleep does not mean everybody else does so too. We're only three people now, getting sneak attacked while we're asleep is much more dangerous than from when we were almost ten." I respond as I fold my arms.

"Hmm, makes sense." Saeko nods as she answers... Saya, just keeps staring at me with a frown.

"I'm going to give you a double night shift..." She mumbles as she turns to look at the map.

(... Huh, moody much?)

With that thought, I turn to look at the supermarket.

"Let's see..." I turn the car engine on and press on the gas.

"The main door of the store is right now to our right, so if we keep going straight, we will end up seeing it from the right doors. Stay on the right seats and check it, I will stop only for a couple of seconds unless I have confirmation that it has corpses inside or that it's

abandoned." Saeko nods as she listens to me and disappears on the back seats, Saya does not answer, but she turns to look at the supermarket nonetheless.

The moment we passed the parking field, I steered to the right, climbing over a small patch of greenery and going into the supermarket's parking field. After that I kept going straight, until the door was just a few meters away. Where I steered sharply to the right and started to slow down. Until the closed glass door was next to us.

(If people are in there, the way I'm driving might make them think we're aggressive... not that I see a problem with that)

"You have five seconds" I say as I stop the car. The girls didn't reply, they just stayed glued to their respective windows.

(4)

"I see something moving inside, but it's too dark to make out" Saeko speaks up.

(3)

"Time's up" I turn the steering wheel to the left, press the gas and...

"Wait! It's a corpse! It's a corpse! There are zombies inside!" Saya shouts causing me to press on the break and switch to R.

I turned the wheel to the left, and drove reverse. Once the car was looking at the glass supermarket doors, switched to D and moved forward, until the hood touched the glass door.

"Hmm, this is the first time you called them something else other than 'Them' " I respond as I close the engine and glance at Saya.

"I had to make sure you understood and didn't drive off like an idiot" Saya folds her arms as she turns to me with a slight grin.

"We should move, timer or not we should not dawdle" Saeko speaks up as she reaches for the hatch.

"Huh, Of course you would want to hurry up 'now'..." Saya pouts as she whines in a low tone and turns to look at the window to her right. Her mood making a full turn compared to seconds ago.

"Saya, keep an eye around. I will take one of the radios, if we lose contact because of the range. Three clicks mean 'get back pronto' " I ignore Saya's remark as I move towards the back. Saeko had already moved to the car's roof.

"I know, I know get moving..." Saya responds with a slight groan.

"And Try not to ruin my night shift too much ahh?" I add up as I grab one of the walky-talkies that were on her 'old' seat.

"Hum, I will keep you up all night, stupid" She answers with a slight huff as she leans between the two front seats, the grin coming back on her face.

" 'You' will keep me up all night Saya?" I respond with a slight smirk as I reach for the hatch and turn to look at her.

"G..get lost you pervert!" She shouts as her eyes widen for a second before she starts glaring at me, her face taking a shade of red...

After I got on the roof I turned to look at Saeko, who just tilted her head at me and smiled.

"Let's go?" She asks as she hands me the Scar-H, a flashlight, and my bag. I just nodded before taking the items and walking on to the car's hood.

"The door is closed shut" I give the door a slight push as I speak.

"Fuck it" Before Saeko could respond, much less get on the hood, I lift the scar-H, and with a strong hit from the gun's stock, the glass shattered into pieces.

"We're already being loud as hell, no point being sneaky about it now" I crouch slightly and enter the building, Saeko following behind me.

Once we entered the Supermarket I looked around. Now that we were inside I had a much better view of the dimly lit place, as I didn't have the sun glare on my face, letting my eyes adapt to the darker environment...

Our 'entry point' was right behind the register counters. There were six of them, lined up horizontally, behind them I could see five aisles, all extending forward towards the wall opposite of our location. Three between rows of double racks and two in the corners. The side ones had a double rack on one side and an in-wall refrigerated rack/open fridge on the other, or well, what used to be refrigerated.

Most of the remaining items I could see on the racks, or the ground around them, were foodstuffs. And judging from the smell, not the edible type ones.

Now, on the right wall, just over the rightmost cashier counter, I could also see an elevator, about ten meters away from us. Deeper down, near the end of that same wall, was another elevator door, and right where that wall ended and the far end wall started, I could see a heavy-looking metal door, one that looked a lot like the one that led to the stairs in the mall. But, you know what they say, nothing's ever easy.

Between us and that door... yea, about ten / fifteen corpses that I could see between the rightmost aisle and the one next to it, no idea if there were any more hiding behind the aisles, or behind the door itself. And as we were not exactly silent, all of em were heading our way.

"Maybe loud and stupid was not such a good idea..." I groan as I look at the corpses.

"Should we fall back?" Saeko asks as she turns to me.

"No, let's check the aisles to the left, maybe we can go past them, worse case, I shoot. Though that will get a horde on the Humvee's backside" I shake my head and go through the nearest counter, the bokken on the ready in case I get jumped on.

After that we ran through to the left, checking each and every aisle... and...

"No good, while not all of the aisles are occupied, corpses have taken over the other side of the store completely, no getting through them" I respond after glancing around one more time.

"It's a shame the elevators don't work, we could have just skipped all this. But, I don't really mind" Saeko slowly draws her sword as a grin appears on her face.

"Wait, the elevators. Maybe we 'can' use them" I motion Saeko with my hand and start running towards the elevator that was next to the rightmost counter.

"We, can? How, there is no electricity" Saeko asks the obvious question as she puts her half-drawn blade back into its sheath. She also sounded a bit, disappointed?

"Yes, but not in the way you think" I respond as I reach the door and check it.

"Hey you two! They're starting to get close! What are you doing!" Saya shouts from over the Humvee's hatch.

Ignoring the shouting chundere, I stab the bokken between the two folding metal doors of the elevator, and then twist it, causing a small opening to appear, I then let go of the bokken and put both hands on

one door and start pulling it. Saeko looks at me for a couple of seconds before running next to me, grabbing the other door.

"Leave that one, we can fit through just by opening this one halfway, just keep an eye on the elevator opening, in case it's 'occupied'" I respond as I glance at her, She nods and backs away before leaning to look through the opening...

"It's too dark inside... but..." She puts her hands on my door, and starts pushing it while occasionally glancing at the opening...

"I see a lot of blood inside, but nothing that looks like a body, standing or otherwise" Saeko keeps looking through the gap as she speaks.

The moment the door opened enough for us to pass I let it go, grab the broken and go inside the blood-soaked elevator, then look up.

(Come on, come on, elevators always have a hatch for the maintenance crew...)

After a quick scan, I noticed one square board in the ceiling's corner that seemed to have an outline, compared to the rest which was all one unified plate. I walk up under it, and give it a strong stab with the bokken, causing it to detach from the elevator and reveal an opening.

(gotcha)

"We'll have to climb up a metallic rope, if you think you want to stay back, now it's the time" I respond as I turn to Saeko, who was also inside the elevator.

"I'm coming with you" She answers plainly.

I nod and crouch down slightly, then get in position to leg her up.

"I know you can probably just jump up there like a ninja, but I gotta do something to not feel like I'm totally useless around here" I

chuckle slightly as I look at her.

"Well, I actually really prefer it when I can have your help." She answers with a slight smile as she puts her boot on my hands.

"I see" With that, I get up and raise my hands, lifting her up.

She goes over the opening, and seconds later, I feel my hands lighten as she lifts herself up and completely disappears into the dark hole, only to appear with her hand extending towards me.

"I would like to believe. That you also feel the same?" She asks as I take her hand.

"Obviously" I answered as I held myself back from chuckling for a second time. Not wanting my answer to seem like a 'joke'.

Taking Saeko's hand, I also climbed up the hole in the elevator.

"Holy shit, it's pitch black here" I look around the claustrophobic vertical 'hallway' as I speak, then put the bokken back in it's 'sheath'.

Normally you see these places being a very open space with the elevators hanging in the air by a bunch of cables, well not this one, this was pretty much a tight fit.

Just then, Saeko opens her flashlight while pointing it upwards.

"Ok, now we climb this rope and... uhh... none of the other doors are open either..." I stop in the middle of my sentence as I also look up.

"At least this means we won't have them falling on our heads" Saeko responds.

"Hey, are you two alright? They have gathered in front of the elevator you just entered" I hear the radio go live just as Saeko finishes speaking.

"Yea we're fine, we won't be exiting the elevator, we're going up" I answer.

"Ok. This place usually has it's seasonal items on the third floor anyway." Saya answers back.

"Got it, thanks" I responded before shoving the radio back into my pocket.

"Third floor... no pressure. Just a closed door that I have no idea how we'll open and a drop that will probably be fatal if we slip and fall while we try..." I say as I open my flashlight and look back up.

"Humm, you take me to the most exciting places" Saeko responds with a slight giggle in a joking manner.

"Yea, roller coasters with no safety measures" I answer as I grab the metallic rope and give it a strong tug, and then with a jump, grab on to it.

"Sounds scary, maybe I would need you to hold my hand" She replies as she keeps smiling.

"With how much fun you seem to be having right now? I find that hard to believe" I respond as I glance behind me, seeing her right under me on the rope.

"That's because. If I can be honest, I missed the moments when it was just the two of us, I'm excited" She replies with a smile on her face...

"Are you trying to make me feel guilty now? Because... you know.." I let out a silent sigh as I speak. Saeko stays quiet for a few seconds...

"... I, trust you. That you will keep your promise to me. But, I'm still a woman. I do, get jealous..." She answers in a slightly more serious tone.

(... She's putting it lightly. I mean, think of it the other way around, what if it was Saeko that had both me and Takashi... yea, not so fun now is it?)

I stop climbing and turn my head to her.

"Thanks for putting up with me" I say as I keep looking at her, she just tilts her head and keeps smiling as she closes her eyes.

"Just remember. A jealous person can just, snap, if not catered for" As she talked I think I saw her smile turn into a small grin the moment she opened her eyes.

"... Noted" I respond with a deadpan voice before continuing to climb the metallic rope.

(Ok I just felt a shiver run up my spine with the way she said that.)

After that we reached the third elevator door in relative silence.

Once it was next to me in height, I stopped climbing and turned to look at it.

(Hmm it has some beam frames protruding from the wall, I could stand there. Thing is, how do I go to them? Jumping is out of the question. High chance I will just end up bouncing off the wall, the beam is too narrow)

"Uhh, got any ideas on how to go on the support beams" I ask as I point around me in a circle.

"Hmm... I got one" Saeko replies a few seconds later.

"No jumping, too risky" I answered.

"It does not include jumping" she chuckles as she replies.

"Ok, what do we do then?" I ask after nodding and turning to look down towards her.

"Stand still" She says as she grabs on to my shoes, and pulls herself up. Until she was holding on to me with her head next to my shoulder.

She then wraps her legs around my waist, right under the bulletproof vest. And leans backward while turning her upper body to look towards the door.

(... I should have asked her what 'she' was thinking of doing... Ok me, ignore everything you feel from the waist down, including what you feel on your back... One wrong step, and broken legs will be the 'best' outcome)

"Got it" Just as she says that she 'let's go' of me, and ends up hanging right under the door. She then climbs up, ending with her back to me.

"Ekhem, Ok. We need to open the door now. Just, be careful, you have no place to hold on over there." I turn my sight to the closed elevator door as I 'clear' my throat.

Saeko nodded and as her flashlight was now on her hip, under the belt that held the katana, she placed both her hands on the spot where the two doors touched, then tried to pry it open... with little success, her hands kept slipping. She shakes her head and takes off her gloves before trying again, again with no success...

"Wait, got an idea, wear your gloves." I say as I shove the flashlight in the side pocket of my pants and pull the bokken from the bag's side straps, then extend it to her.

"I don't think I will be able to jam it between the doors while being in the position I'm in" She replies as she takes the wooden blade.

"You won't, just place it between the doors for a sec, I think I can kick it from this distance." I respond as I slightly shake my head.

Saeko nods and does as I asked.

(Ok, let's see)

I turn towards the door and let go one hand from the metal rope to balance myself, then wrap the rope around my right leg, lift my left leg, and 'stomp' the blade's hilt.

With a relatively loud thud, the wooden blade digs between the two doors. I guess the tension of the rope must have been pretty high, as I didn't even wobble during all this.

"It's through, let me do the rest" Saeko puts one of her hands in the slit between the doors and starts pulling the door. Taking the bokken out the moment the door started to move.

"Wait, don't open it anymore" I respond as I take the flashlight out and aim it at the small opening...

(... Can't see any corpses, but the opening is too small to see effectively)

"Ok, keep going, I will tell you if you need to stop, and throw the bokken through the opening so you can use both hands" I glance at Saeko as I speak, she nods and starts pulling again after passing the bokken through the gap.

And slowly, I started to see the insides of the third floor... or well the rack that was facing the door, but more importantly, no corpses.

"Ok, looks clear from here. We can fit through that gap, but can't see the corners, be careful" I say as I keep aiming the flashlight at the opening. Saeko nods and crouches down, then peeks through the gap...

"Three of them on the left end of the wall, they are coming towards us. Wait here" She gets up and slides through the gap, then turns to the left...

"... Oh, ok. I'm just gonna, hang out here..." I respond to nobody in particular...

(I think I just heard a 'ta dum tss'... god my jokes are crap)

And seconds later, I hear a relatively loud thud, followed by another, and another...

Saeko then appears before the gap, sheathing her sword. She lays down on the floor, the upper part of her body going over the door's gap, and extends her arm to me.

I let myself slide down a little to come to the same height as her hand, and grab it.

Then let go of the rope completely. And end up sort of 'slamming' the wall under the door.

"Are you alright?" I hear Saeko ask.

"Yea, I'm fine, me and landings just don't get along very well, I can take it from here" I respond as I grab the support beam with my other hand and release my grip on Saeko's arm.

She nods and lets go of me, then slides back after lifting herself up, because you know. Her chest kinda didn't 'fit in', for her to just slide backward.

After I hoisted myself up and went through the elevator's open door, I picked the bokken off the ground and looked to my left, at three decapitated corpses. Then looked behind me, at the empty aisle.

The place looked identical to the first floor, except that instead of the registers, it had one extra row of two-sided racks in their place, and the refrigerated selves were replaced by hanging hooks, also, everything on this aisle was 'summertime'. A butt-load of lotions and sunscreens along with bottles I could not really make out the use of

on one side. Along with swimsuits, sandals and various types of hats on the hangars on the opposite wall. But most importantly...

"This place is completely untouched, compared to the first floor that was wrecked and empty at least" I whisper as I look around.

"Maybe only the locals came here after the outbreak? So they went to the first floor that seemed to have food and perishables?" Saeko responds with a question.

"Yea, or the second floor is a bloody mess" I answer as I look towards the closed metal door on the far right that leads downstairs.

"Could be, if there are more corpses on the floor below it would make sense why this one looks untouched, as I think we are also the first ones to come up here by using the elevator, as the door was closed" Saeko responds as she looks around.

"It also seems to be a bit darker here" I add up as I turn to look at the windowed walls to our left.

"Hmm, I am pretty sure that the third-floor windows, when I saw them from outside, looked like mirrors. Maybe they are covered with a one-way film?" Saeko again answers with a question.

"Possibly, would explain why this floor is darker too" I nod before looking at the bokken.

(Hmm, there are some scratches on the 'blade', still, not too shabby considering what I just did with it.)

"In any case, don't spread out, let's check every aisle and door in this floor first, staircase excluded, if it has corpses, I don't want them coming in here until we're done" I tap my free hand lightly with the bokken as I turn to look at Saeko, she responds with a silent nod.

With that, we moved from our aisle and went left, to the row that had replaced the cashier counters. After checking both sides of that row,

we then entered its right side and checked each aisle to our right as we moved forward...

(As empty as it gets, the only corpses on the floor were the ones Saeko killed. Hmm, why were they all in one spot?)

I stop in my tracks and motion Saeko to turn around as I start walking back the way we came, she tilts her head questionably before turning following me. After reaching the end of the aisle we were in, I turn to look to my right, at the corner of the building where the corpses met Saeko, and their end, for a second time.

And, there was a door there...

"Saeko, where are these three in front of that door?" I ask as I point at the metal door.

"Hmm, I think so? I didn't really check as they were already moving by the time I saw them" She responds as she folds her arms.

I nod and move to the door...

(... There are bloody handprints on it, rather cliché, but it means they tried to get inside. And failed)

I then try to open the door, only for it to get stuck after opening a couple centimeters.

"It's barricaded from the inside?... huh" I back off from the door and turn to Saeko.

"Let's leave it for now. Shopping first." I point back at the rest of the room.

"Alright, So what should we look for?" Saeko nods as she asks.

"Hmm, The hard plastic swimming pool, anything we can use as curtains for it, like waterproof sheets, normal towels, electric devices

that might still work. I got batteries in my bag to check em.." I stop for a minute as I fold my arms.

"We can also check if this place has any mini generators or binoculars, though I doubt it" I nod slightly before looking back at Saeko.

"Alright, should we split up?" She asks right after.

"Yea, but in the same aisle, stay within sight" I respond, Saeko nods once again.

With that, we moved back into the previous aisle we were in, the one that led to the other aisles from its right side.

(Hmm this aisle is mostly flip flops, hats, and plastic shoulder bags... nothing we need)

We then moved to the first aisle in the line, the one by the wall.

(Like I saw when I first entered this floor, the left racks here seem to be full of bottles and the hangers on the right have swimsuits, hats, and sandals)

I moved closer to the rack with the bottles while Saeko casually strolled towards the swimsuits.

(Sunscreens, lipsticks, hand creams, bug repellents. This place has a rather big variety for its si... wait?... hand creams?)

I narrow my eyes and look at the lined up plastic tubes as I fold my arms... until my eyes stopped in front of a Strawberry hand cream tube.

(Right!... I promised Saya I would get her a new one in the cop station didn't I?... Heh, my selective memory sometimes amazes me)

I smile slightly as I pocket a couple of them, some with different flavors, because why not, they're free after all.

Turning around, I see Saeko with a female swimsuit in her hands.

"You're going to get a swimsuit?" I ask. Saeko shakes her head slightly then puts it back on the hangar.

"No, I already have one, the one from the island" She replies as she turns to me.

(... 'swimsuit'... she would look less provoking if she walked around naked rather than in that to be honest...)

"Now that I think of it, you don't have one right? You never wore one during our time on the island" She asks after a few seconds.

"No, I didn't. And I'm damn glad about it." I respond as I fold my arms. Saeko just puts her hand over her mouth as she lets go of a giggle.

"Maybe you can get one now." She turns to look at the swimsuits as she speaks.

"Uhh, why not" I shrug slightly as I walk up to the wall and grab a pair of black board shorts, then take off my bag and shove them in... only to realize that my bag actually had a lot of free space inside, more than it should..

"Huh? Did my bag increase in size? It feels like there's way more space here than there should be" I tilt my head as I raise an eyebrow.

"Oh, I took off some things that we would probably not need, to make space for the things we might get from here. I took off the extra clothes for example. I... I'm sorry I didn't ask for your permission, I thought..."

"Don't, it was a good decision. Come on let's go on" I cut her off as I close the bag and turn around.

"Umm, Naier?" Saeko speaks up the moment I turn my back to her. Causing me to turn my head back.

"You won't make sure it fits you?" She asks as she keeps looking at me.

"These things have laces rather than elastic waistbands, it should be fine as long as it's not comically larger or smaller" I respond as I shrug.

"Oh... I see" Saeko blinks a couple of times before she starts walking towards me...

With that, we went to the second aisle, this one. This one had a variety of inflatables on one side and toys on the other. Stuff like plastic buckets, shovels, small ships...

"Hmm, you think the hard plastic pools are here?" Saeko peeks over my shoulder as she speaks.

"No idea, but, we can use the normal ones too" I respond as I walk up to the inflatables. Saeko tilts her head and follows me.

"Put one under a sleeping bag and you got yourself a bed that doesn't suck." I add up as I crouch down and check a couple of boxes with bed sized inflatables.

"Hmm, nice thinking. But, won't they be too noisy? These things usually squeak way too much" Saeko lowers herself to my height by also crouching down, until her knees are touching her chest, she then wraps her arms around her legs.

"Depends how you set them up, cover the bottom with towels to avoid punctures and soften the ground, then cover the top with a sheet or more towels to avoid skin contact with the plastic, and it

should be relatively quiet. The material and how inflated it is also matters" I respond as I take a box out of the shelf and turn it around.

"Have you used them like that before? You seem knowledgeable on the subject" She asks as she keeps looking at me.

"Yes, a couple of times" I responded.

"Hmm..." She hums silently as she also takes a box and adjusts her posture by sitting seiza style, so she can place it on her legs.

I casually turn my head towards Saeko and look at the box she picked...

(... That one is, for 'two' people...)

"You will need a pump for this thing, you 'don't' want to fill it up by blowing it" I respond as I put my finger on the box she was holding.

"You don't mind that it's meant for two people?" She 'asks' with a slight smile.

"It's better than trying to share a couch..." I respond. Saeko stares at me for a few seconds, then her eyes slightly open as she starts blushing, as if she 'just' remembered that she actually slept on me when we were in the rich folk's house.

"You really don't like giving straightforward answers, don't you?" She answers back as she tilts her head slightly, the blush still on her face.

"Not going to deny that" I responded as I folded my arms.

"And that couch. Was the best sleep I got in years..." Saeko then speaks up as she glances away from me.

"So that's why you drooled on me?" I 'ask' as I raise my hand.

Saeko darts her head back to me and starts to actually blush now.

"That, it was an accident. I don't normally do that, really. It was just, I was tired and I fell asleep in a weird pose. I'm surprised myself that it actually happened." Saeko was now hugging the cardboard box she had on her legs. Something that I think she did seem to realize, as she was way too focused on explaining herself to me.

(God I'm getting cuteness overload here)

"Well, guess we'll find out if that's true tonight" I responded as I pointed at the box she was now hugging.

Saeko blinks a couple of times before she lowers her head to look at the box...

"Thank you..." She didn't move her head as she whispered...

"Wait. I get to sleep with the girl that was ranked as the sexiest student in the academy, and I'm the one getting thanked? The world is damn friggin weird I tell ya" I respond as I frown slightly.

Saeko just raised her head and looked at me with a weird expression.

"I was ranked. What?" She asks as she keeps staring at me.

"The sexiest student in the academy? You didn't know?" I ask back

"N..no, I didn't pay too much attention to school gossip..." She responds with a slightly surprised expression.

(While she did distance herself from others, this, is almost comical...)

"Well now you do, though most of your fans are walking corpses by now. Then again, I should be glad about that, if they knew I kissed you, they would try to gut me alive. Well they'll still try to do that, but not for the same reason" I answer with a slight shrug.

"Not if I gut them first" She replies as her expression returns to normal. Well, if you call smiling with a blushing face 'normal' for Saeko.

(God, why must this happen in the middle of an infested supermarket while we have the car attracting a shitstorm downstairs... I see the friggin death flag-raising if this goes on)

"So, uhhh. I don't mean to be the mood killer here but. We are short on time... how about we continue this, chat, in a place where we are not on a horde timer?" I ask as I place my hand on her shoulder and stroke it slightly.

"I understand, and, I'll look forward to it" She closes her eyes and nods.

(Talk about going commander cockblock on myself...)

"So, uhh, we're going to need a single bed as well. For two reasons" I say as I get up and look around for a more expensive inflatable.

"Hmm, two reasons?" Saeko asks as she opens the package and puts the folded inflatable in her bag.

"Yea, one is, there are three of us. It's called a two-people size for a reason. And second, the third one of the 'us' won't let me hear the end of it if we bring only the double-sized one" I respond as I turn to Saeko and fold my arms.

She puts her hand over her mouth as she starts giggling.

"I guess you're right" She answers before turning to look at the other inflatables.

"So, you said we also need a pump?" She asks as she gets up while still looking at the boxes in display.

"Yea, I didn't see any pumps being sold separately yet, so look for expensive inflatables, they might have one inside, we also still need

the tub" I answer.

"Hmm, how about we check the rest of the floor first?" Saeko asks as she turns to me.

"That could work too." I answer as I grab the most expensive 'single bed' inflatable, open it, and shove it in my bag.

With that, we moved to the third Aisle. This one seemed to have 'furniture' for the lack of a better term, foldable chairs, tents, plastic tables and electrical appliances.

"Hmm, a foldable chair 'could' be useful if we stay in a place with no chairs. But in any case, let's check the electric stuff first" I say as I open my bag and grab a couple of batteries.

Saeko nods, takes some of them and moves ahead of me, towards the end of the aisle.

I started by looking at the ones next to me...

(... God the selves here look like a circus. Fans, juice makers, ice makers, cameras, portable air conditioners... blenders?... no I think that's an ice cream maker... but, all of these things have cable cord... hmm?)

I stop browsing along the stuff and grab a small box with a palm-sized fan, take it out and then flip it around.

(This definitely takes batteries)

I open the bottom cover and place a battery in the hole, then close the cover and turn the thing on...

(Nada)

I take the battery back, throw the burnt fan behind me and pick another one.

(Nope, let's try a different brand)

I then pick a fan from a different stack and put the battery inside it... a silent whirring sound starts the moment I close the cover and press on the switch.

(Ohh, it's alive)

I then pick a couple more fans of the same brand and test them out...

Three out of the five turned out to be alive the moment they had a battery inside.

(Hmm don't know when we'll need them, but well, they are small so whatever)

I open my bag and throw the small fans inside. Then take a few steps to my left and stop over what seemed to be solar power banks.

(Wonder if these things still work or not)

I take one out of the box and look at it.

(Uhh, nope, can't tell like this. And I doubt they are normally charged to check on another appliance...)

Nonetheless, I put a couple in my bag and kept looking.

"Found anything?" I hear a voice next to me as I keep looking at all the stuff we can't use without a generator.

"Battery-powered fans and some solar power banks that I have no idea whether they work or not" I respond. Saeko just tilts her head questionably...

"What about charging them, the sun is still out" She asks.

"Yea that could work, but one of us will have to stay by the window" I respond.

"Hmm. Ok, I can go by the windows and hold the power banks out while you check the rest of the aisles" Saeko looks at the windows as she speaks.

"We have been making enough noise till now for any hiding corpses to jump out, still, keep your eyes inside the building" I nod as I turn to her.

"Of course, can I have the power banks?" She asks right after.

"Give me a sec, they're in my bag. If they don't work, there are more over there" I point behind me and to my right as I take off my bag, open it and hand her the power banks.

"Alright... How do I know that they work?" She asks as she takes the palms sized gadgets and starts staring at them.

"They should have an on button somewhere, and a sign of how fully charged they are. I don't see a hud on them so I guess they should have light indicators that they have power." I respond, Saeko nods as she keeps looking at the power banks before lifting her head towards me.

"Ok, I'll head to the next aisle. Hmm before you go, check if you can find a chair or two that can fit in your bag" I throw my bag over my shoulder and turn around, Saeko nods and also turns around..

Now the next aisle had clothes. Summertime clothes, not swimsuits. I only briefly checked that aisle. As well, summer clothes would have even worse protection than our clothes. And both Saya and Saeko don't lack in terms of 'summertime' clothing collection.

(Now that I think of it, I need to get some actual bite resistant, waterproof clothes. As long as they can keep saliva out of wounds, a bite should but be just that, a bite. Painful, but not deadly.

Uhh, where is Amazon when you need it... that place would definitely have bite-resistant stuff. I know Japan has a couple of their warehouses, but hell if they are not lotted. I still have the trenchcoat, but I have not checked how much of a stab resistance it has.)

And so, I went to the last aisle, this one to my surprise, was mostly bathroom stuff. Shampoos, a billion female accessories, toothbrushes and some actual bathroom items, like handheld shower hoses and bathroom towels.

(Hmm, I could use one of these waterproof shower curtains, and the towels, I think I saw some beach towels on the racks by the wall with the stairs, the ones on the other side of the room, but ehh, these are softer. And we do have some towels in the car. Or I think we do, since we left Saya's house.)

With that, I picked a couple of shower curtains that were not see-through, because come on. Have some class, and a couple of towels. And just as I was starting to move forward...

"Hey what is taking you so long? And did you just open a window?" I hear the radio go live.

"We are almost done, and yea we opened a window. we're checking some solar power banks" I respond as I bring the radio close to my face.

"Well hurry up, they have surrounded the car." Saya responds.

"Yea, we will be back soo..." As I speak my eyes stop in front of a couple of toothbrushes...

"Question, you need a toothbrush?" I ask on the radio.

"... What?" I hear Saya ask back.

"Do you have a toothbrush?" I ask again...

"Of course I have a toothbrush you idiot. " Saya groans at me.

"Alright, I'll focus on finishing here then." I respond as I let go of the talk button and shove the radio in my pocket, then grab a bunch of toothbrushes.

(Who knows when we will get another chance, better have some just in case. And toothpaste.

Still, It makes me wonder. Does the whole tooth decay gig work like body smell here, in other words, it doesn't? I mean in the anime I never saw any of them brush their teeth, and sure the bath scene was pure fanservice, but here it means that they, well, took a bath. Yet I never saw them brush a tooth, Nor ever complain about bad breath to each other, and you know, some of them tended to spend a lot of time next to each other's... mouths.

While I 'have' been brushing my teeth whenever I had the chance to do so, it's only because I have been doing it so long that I'm used to it. Yet, I have also noticed that everybody here has perfect teeth, corpses included, because you know, they tend to show them a lot when they try to bite chunks out of you. Huh, between overpowered E.M.P.s, broken shotgun physics, non-existent body smell, the ability to bash skulls in with a plain bat. Guess I can add this in the 'weird stuff list'... Don't look a gift horse in the mouth, literally.

But ehh, old habits die hard, better safe than sorry.)

After also raiding the toothpaste sector of the rack, I close the bag and turn to head towards Saeko. Whom I found leaning on an open windowpane.

"Any luck" I ask as I walk to her.

"I think so" She responds as she backs away from the window and walks up to me.

"This one lights up, the other two do not seem to react" She shows me one of the three power banks in her hand as she speaks.

"Hmm, alright. Let's take a bunch of power banks for us to check in the car. Don't know what we can use them for, as they are normally used for charging cell phones or other very small appliances, but we'll see. There are other things I'd like to check, but we have no time left. So we look for the pump and 'tub', then bail" I respond, Saeko nods at me and turns to walk towards the aisle with the power banks, me following behind her

(I'm not even going to ask her about the toothbrush thing. I had enough 'close ups' with her to know that she either has one, or people here indeed don't need to brush.)

I then take the radio out.

"We'll be going down soon, is the elevator still blocked?" I ask.

"Yes, but I can shoot them. If the gun gets stuck again, I can deal with it." Saya responds.

"Alright, I'll give you the go when it's time." I respond before closing the radio then grab a couple of solar power banks, shoving them in the bag.

"Ok, pump and tub left" I fold my arms as I look further down the aisle.

"... Check for the pump, I will see for the pool, if there isn't anything like that around, I will take one of the 'boaty' floats I saw, they can act as a mini tub" I turn to look at Saeko as I speak, she nods and walks past me.

(Ok let's see...)

I keep browsing the inflatables, until my sight stops to a box that writes 'Small above ground swimming pool'.

(Ohh, lucky break is me)

I take the box and look at it.

(One meter huh? This would do perfectly, not too big, but not knee-deep either and the box is rather small, it can probably fit in the bag)

I keep looking at the image in the front cover, and see that it also had a pump inside.

(Aaand we. Are. Done)

I open the box and take out the folded 'tub' then also take the small pump and shove them both in the bag.

"Saeko, I found both, we're leaving" I speak up as I look at her, she turns to me as she leaves a box back in the rack and nods.

With that, we moved back towards the elevator door. Once there, I pulled out the radio.

"Open fire, we're coming down" Then put the radio back in my pocket, slide through the door gap, and jump. Grabbing the metal wire with both hands before wrapping my legs around it, letting myself 'slide' down.

Once I reached the bottom I moved away and looked through the hole on the elevator.

(No corpses in the elevator itself)

And just then, I heard a gunshot, followed shortly after by more shots, all fired in slow succession.

"Now we wait until Saya gives us the all-clear" I fold my arms as I speak, glancing at Saeko who was next to the metal rope.

"You think she will be able to shoot them all? There were quite a lot of them on the first floor" She asks as she walks up next to me.

"She has a car full of ammo and knows the basics, even if she misses half her shots, that's twenty or so bullets. The Mp5 holds fifteen. Worse case, she gets jam combo-ed and will have to reload

the clip or use the handgun. In other words, we'll just have to wait longer up here, also corpses can't get on the Humvee, so the only problem is leaving. And with the humvee's ability to go four-wheel rough terrain mode, it will manage just fine" I respond as I fold my arms.

"I guess you are right." Saeko nods slightly as she glances at the elevator hatch.

And just then, the gunshots stopped.

"Hey, I cleared them all" And the radio comes alive.

"Is it clear down there from what I can see " I hear Saeko speak as she leans next to me, looking towards the hatch.

"Yea, let's go. Next time, I'll try not to take you to a claustrophobic dark vertical hallway for an outing" I nod and jump down, Saeko following behind me.

"Ohh? It's a promise then." Saeko raises an eyebrow before she smiles and leans towards me.

(Me and my big mouth)

"For now, let's get out of here" I ready the Scar-H for good measure, and slide out of the door.

Several corpses were on the floor to our left, the same way we needed to go to reach the Humvee.

"Well Saya, I trust that you shot them all dead, if one bites me. Shoot me in the head!" I shout as I start walking towards the corpses.

"... W..Waht?! S..Stop! Go around them you friggin idiot! HEEY!" And Saya ends up mixing her words as she shouts.

(She just said waht didn't she?)

I chuckle slightly as I take a path where corpse bodies were not blocking the way until I reached the car, then turn around to see Saeko behind me.

With that, I jumped on the hood and back to the hatch, while Saya crawled back inside. After that, I left my bag and went to the driver's seat. As Saeko got in, I looked in the side mirror.

"You weren't kidding, they have indeed swarmed the car." I say as I switched the car to 'R'.

"Told you so" Saya responds as she folds her arms.

"But you know what they say. Stand in front of tanks? The tanks are gonna win." I press on the gas as I grip the steering wheel with one hand.

The car, with a roar, knocks over the corpses that have gathered behind it and climbs over them. Once we were clear of them, I turned the car around and switched to D.

"I wonder what the second floor had" I glance at the supermarket as I press on the gas.

"I don't know. I know what it doesn't have. Windows" Saya responds plainly.

"... Suddenly, I'm glad I didn't check it. In any case, Saya I'ma need directions to the convenience store" I give the supermarket one last glance as I shake my head slightly...

(I also didn't check that sealed of room in the third floor... but whatever)

... And like so, I stepped on the gas, and drove away...

...

..

supermarket's third floor...

A person was standing behind the blocked off door, peeking through the small opening. Camera in his hand...

"WHY DIDN'T YOU KIIITHH!11!?"

What did you really want?

(I don't when I don't know how. But someday, I will thank Rika for the car)

Having no clocks, I didn't really know how much time had passed since we left the supermarket. What I did know was, that we reached our destination in one piece.

"Home sweet home. If home is a run-down store that is." I shut down the car's engine as it entered the alleyway by the convenience store, the same alleyway we parked it in last time. Even the door we unscrewed and used as a makeshift barricade was still there.

"Well, with the shutter's down, it should be relatively safe" Saya responds as she starts packing her stuff back in her bag. Aka the map and radios.

"At least I can't see any corpses around right now" Saeko adds as she keeps leaning between the two front seats.

"They probably got drawn away by the engine's sound, when we left with the car last time." I answer as I steer the car close towards the store's wall to my right, then turn left, in order to create that 'cone' shape with the opposite wall, so we can use the door to block the opening once again.

"Which means, we'll have them coming back now..." Saya stops fiddling with her bag as she speaks.

"More corpses, less curious survivors" I answer plainly.

"Yea yea, I know." Saya sighs slightly as she hugs her bag and turns to look at me.

"In any case, let's go." I open the door, take my bag and exit the car.

(Hmm, maybe I should have parked with the hood facing the road. Oh well.)

"Saya, remember how we set up the door last time?" I ask as I turn to the pink-haired girl after reaching the metal door that laid on the ground.

"Yea, and seeing how you parked, I take it we'll do the same thing again?" Saya asks as she exits the car and turns to look at said door.

I nod, pick it up, and move to place it between the car and the wall.

Saya first checked to see if the humvee's backside completely blocked the right wall, then walked around the hood and came up to me, on the door's opposite site. Saeko just stared for a couple of seconds before walking up to me as well.

With that, we shoved the store's door between the car and the wall, ending up with the store's door 'jamming' on the driver's door.

"Alright, we're not aiming to stay here for too long, so it should do for now" I say as I back away and nod.

Saeko glances at me before also taking a few steps back, Saya was actually on the other side of the barricade, so she just stared at me.

"Saeko, come on." I motion with my head as I move to climb up the car's trunk...

I actually saw Saya smirking to herself as I and Saeko moved from the trunk to the hood of the car.

(Is she really feeling that triumphant because she didn't have to climb this time around? Heh, cute.)

After grouping back up, we headed to the back alleyway of the store. Towards the back door that led to the small hallway that had the stairs which led to the upper floor to its left.

"Did we leave the door open?" I ask as I stop and raise my arm.

"Can't remember. We left in a rush and I was barely awake" Saya responds as she peeks over my shoulder. Or you know, she tried to, being that I'm a head taller than her.

"Wait here" I move forward and to the left, towards the opposite wall from which the store's door was at.

(If it has people inside... what do I do? Leave? Kick them out? Group up? Each decision sounds worse than the last one, especially if I'll have to trust that a bunch of random hobos won't try anything funny while we're asleep. Saeko and Saya were after all, based on Morita. Among the 'hottest' girls in our school, even by this world's standards, and, I totally agree with him.)

Upon reaching the open door I looked through it, at the hallway and small visible 'front' room that had the cashier counter.

(Looks empty. While people will probably stop at gunpoint, corpses won't. And shooting might not be a very smart idea if we want to stay here for the night. Maybe I should get Saya's gun, though the intimidation factor of the Scar-H is way higher, and corpses won't react as long as I'm not stepping on rubber ducks.)

With that thought, I walked through the back door. After glancing at the stairs, I went to the main room.

(Empty. While there are signs of 'normal' people being here, it could just be from our stay here. We didn't exactly clean up after us...)

I do a quick sweep of the surrounding area and rooms. Them being the storage room on the tinted thick glass wall to my left, the toilets that were next to the storage room, and the manager's office behind the register in the wall to my right, with the missing door...

(Everything's clear, toilets still stink.)

I move away from the main room and head towards the hallway. Once the stairs were to my right I took my flashlight, opened it, and placed it under the gun's handguard.

(Need to find a 'no hands' flashlight, one that can hang from a pocket on the vest for example. Holding the gun like this is just downright retarded.)

I climb up the steps and then turn to the right, towards the dark room that me and the group slept in last time. I then stop by the door and do a quick scan before actually moving in.

(No creepy crawlies here.)

I stop looking through the gun's scope and let out a small sigh.

(Ok, all's clear. I don't see any signs of people 'staying' either. The place was unbarricaded and there aren't any bags or anything that looks like a bed or mattress around.)

With that, I pocket the flashlight and go down the stairs, then exit through the back door and motion at the two waiting girls to come.

"Is it safe?" Saya asks as she silently walks next to me, then glances inside.

"Looked empty from what I saw, keep your eyes open nonetheless" I respond.

"I'll go lock the car and take a bag of food along with the gas stove. If you'll start setting the uhh, tub. Make sure it's elevated from the floor, will make it easier to empty it once we're done" I glance at the girls as I speak.

"You want to siphon it? You know we need a hose for that right? " Saya asks as she folds her arms.

"Found a hose in the storage room, the door in the wall that's made of tinted glass next to the toilets. Along with a mop, a broom, and a

bucket. Cleaning supplies if I had to guess.

"Fine, but I'm not touching that hose" Saya responds.

"I'll deal with it. In any case, I'm heading to the car. Any food preferences from the stuff that we have in there?" I ask as I start walking, then stop, turn around and look at the girls again.

"Hmm, I saw a lot of uncooked rice and pasta in the boxes. Everything else was canned so I didn't check it in detail. Looked mostly like meat and fish." Saeko responds as she tilts her head slightly...

"Mostly low acidic items in the cans then. Makes sense, they last longer" Saya adds up.

"I see, neither of you answered my question though" I respond as I fold my arms. Causing both girls to stare at me for a couple of seconds.

"R, right... tuna. I want tuna" Saya responds with a mumble as she glances away.

"If I can be picky, anything with rice" Saeko responds.

(You call that being picky? Jeez Saeko.)

"So tuna with rice, I'll check what we have" I nod and turn around.

(Wonder who'll cook. Saeko definitely can as seen from Rika's house. I can... somewhat. Saya, I have no freaking idea... seeing as she has pink hair, and is princess-like. Maybe she also fails to cook sandwiches, like a certain princess from Terca Lumireis...)

I let out a small chuckle as I kept walking towards the car...

Upon reaching it, I checked that no corpses were on the other side of the barricade before climbing over the Humvee. And after jumping off to the other side, I open the trunk and look inside.

(Hmm, the stove is in the duffle bag with the gas canisters. The food is in the uhh uncolored aka brown crates, water's in the blue ones.)

I glance at the red crates as I open the duffle bag.

(We need a shotgun, all that ammo is useless right now. And speaking of ammo, the first thing we'll probably run out is handgun ammo, aka 10mm, as we have four weapons that use it. Saeko's handgun, my handgun and Saya's Mp5 and handgun. The rifle ammo should be fine as the only weapon that can use it is the Scar-H. Plus, the only weapon that did use that ammo was Kohta's Ar-10, as Rei used the M1-A1 as a glorified stabbing pole.)

After a quick glance behind me I started adding the stuff we needed into my bag, a couple of gas canisters, the gas stove along with some of its utensils, like metal pots and a ladle, two packets of rice and a few water bottles. As for the tuna...

(Hmm, the gas stove is bigger than the bag, about one-third of it is poking out, anyway. canned food...)

I then start looking at the sealed cylindrical cans inside the food-filled crate.

(The girls were not wrong, most of the stuff here seems to be meat and fish. And from what I can see, they're all 'plain flavor'. Wonder if we have... hmm?)

My eyes stop on what seemed to be plastic packages with... powder? I pick one of the orange ones and feel its weight, then read the label.

(Curry? The plastic is pretty thick, it also looks airtight... not really a fan of spicy stuff though.)

I leave the pack back in its place and pick another one. This one green in color.

(Uhh, I'll just take this one and ask Saeko if it sticks with rice and tuna. Oh and I better pick some chopsticks for the two. I'll just use my Swiss-knife as it has a small spoon and fork extension. Think I saw it in an inside pocket in my bag.)

I pocket the materials and close the hood, then lock it and climb back over to the 'safe' side. I then back away a few steps and look over at the barricade...

(I'm starting to see more corpses on the road. But as I said, more corpses means less alive people sticking their noses here... and seeing as it's just me Saeko and Saya now, the last thing I need is a bunch of Shido's knocking on my front door...)

After giving the barricade a quick check I start heading back towards the store's back door.

(I'm not aiming to spend days here, but we should probably reinforce the barricade somehow.)

After going back inside I moved to the main room to see Saya and Saeko on my left, In the corner of the room, stacking up boxes next to each other.

"Hmm, this should suffice" Saeko speaks up.

"We still need to set up the curtains" Saya responds.

"We could move one of the shelves to the right. They have metal bars we could use to tie the curtains on" Saeko answers as she glances to her right, causing Saya to turn her head towards the store's display shelves.

"... The bars will be too low if the pool is placed on the boxes..."
Saya mumbles after a few seconds...

"Not really, the only thing visible will be your head" Saeko tilts her head slightly as she turns to her.

"Yea but Nai..."

"You're already calling me a pervert for reasons I can't fathom, I'm not aiming to give you an actual reason to back up your claims here by being one" I butt in as Saya starts speaking again, causing both girls to turn to me. With quite the different expressions...

Saeko looked as casual as ever. Then again, we sort of came to the conclusion that we'll be sleeping in the same bed while we still had the choice of not doing so. Saya was being Saya. She just stared at me with a frown and a slight blush...

And seeing as our genius could not find a comeback, I turned to Saeko.

"I found some tuna and rice, no oil. Also picked some dried herbs. Hope they won't make the tuna come back to life" I take off my bag and leave it on the counter after walking over to it.

"You would have solved the riddle of why the dead are walking if it did though" Saeko responds with a giggle as she walks up to me.

"You want me to cook?" She asks right after.

"My cooking skills are water boiled pasta and sandwich level, I'm not signing up for the job" I respond as I start taking everything out of the bag.

"Alright, I will cook for us then" Saeko nods with a smile.

"There are only two chopstick sets here" Saya, who had crept up behind us, points at the chopsticks as she speaks..

"Yea, I'm better off stabbing people with chopsticks rather than using them to eat" I respond as I start looking inside my bag again, then take a small, thin plastic bag with the Swiss-knife inside and place it next to the chopsticks.

(Huh? Was this always inside a bag or did Saeko put it in there when she checked my bag?)

"Hope you don't mind, but I'm going western barbarian on this" I add up with a chuckle as I turn to the girls.

"I will start cooking after we have taken a bath then" Saeko nods at me.

"Ah! Speaking of bath" Saya turns to me and points her finger to my face, or well, mask.

"We need to set some rules around here" She adds up as she leans towards me and puts her other hand on her hip.

(... I'm not going to like this...)

"Not gonna agree till I hear them" I answer as I tilt my head slightly. Saya narrows her eyes.

"Girls take baths first" She begins, I nod. Saeko nods as well.

"When we're taking a bath, you are not allowed in the room" She continues, I nod again...

"We'll wear different clothes after taking a bath, In order to wash the ones we used outside" She adds up, both me and Saeko nod.

"So you're not allowed to wear your ma..."

"Request denied" I cut Saya off.

"Fine, we vote for it" Saya smirks at me as she narrows her eyes even more.

(Like hell we are, I know Saeko will vote on your side in this matter...)

"Nope" I respond.

"You can't nope this you idiot, it's a group decision." She answers back, then raises her hand with the smirk still on her face.

Then both of us turn to Saeko... She looks at me for a couple of seconds...

"Is it that horrible that we desire to be able to see your actual face?" She asks as she raises her hand.

"W... wha, I'm just saying this because it's just stupid for him to wear it constantly" Saya leans her body back to a normal posture and darts her head to Saeko as her eyes go wide.

"B..but whatever, the reasons don't matter. Two versus one, no mask, period. Take it off" She then darts her head to me as she puts both hands on her hips and leans towards me once again.

(Saya kicked it into overdrive here.)

"... Fine, after I have taken a bath. I need to clean it anyway" I respond with a nonchalant shrug.

"Hum, about time." Saya huffs triumphantly as she folds her arms and straightens her back again, the smirk still on her face.

"Uhh, ok so. Let's set the pool? I'll go get the hose" I respond as I raise both arms slightly above my head and turn to walk away.

"I'll set the pool" Saeko responds.

"I'll deal with the curtains," Saya adds up.

(I'll let them have this, maybe it'll get Saya to ease up on the chundereism. And Saeko... well I guess she asked nicely?)

With that I walk past the little 'stage' the girls set up with the boxes and walk into the storage room.

(Alright so, the hose should be...)

I turned my head to the right, until my sight fell on a bucket at the end of the narrow hallway that thankfully still remained walkable, what with all the storage shelves that had been placed in the already narrow room.

I nod, walk up to the bucket and peek inside, a green garden hose coiled inside it.

(Good I didn't dream of it being here after all)

I pick up the hose and start walking outside as I glance at it.

(It has an attachment that seems to lock on faucets, good thing as nobody would want to stay in that damn toilet.)

I give the hose a tug as I walk outside the room.

(Thought about using it as a rope. But it's made by a rather soft plastic, easy to get cut by sharp objects or rip under pressure.)

"I'm going to open the door to smelly land, you might wanna hold your noses" I say as I lift my head and look towards the boxes, where Saeko and Saya were working on the new 'bathroom', toilet excluded.

"Don't take too long, or I'm going to lock you in there if you start smelling like that" Saya replies as she turns to me with a slight smirk.

"Thanks for letting me know, now I'm definitely breaking down the door if it gets stuck" I reply as I casually walk towards the actual bathroom.

(God even with the toilets working this place manages to smell like a cesspool... not that I know how one smells, but uhh, it's waste and sewage shoved in an open hole, can't be very high is smelling ratings.)

While trying to keep breathing to a minimum, I head to the faucet and turn it on, causing water to start running for a few seconds,

before closing it again.

(I wonder how long it'll be until the taps run dry... Having running water now means that not a lot of people are actually using the city's water system. Maybe the survivor camps like the elementary school, the mansion and Saya's apartment used local reserves? If they used taps, then the water should at least have had less pressure power by now. Hmm, whatever the case, it's one more reason why we need to move it. Filtration pump or not, I don't want to risk drinking groundwater. And well, at least I can say that the city's water is not what started the infection, we would be walking corpses by Rika's house otherwise.)

I then take the end of the hose that had an orange attachment that opened like a funnel in the end and lock it on the faucet before exiting the bathroom.

"The hose is set, water is still running, better not overuse it though. We don't know when it'll run out now that the city's infrastructure is as dead as its residents" I glance towards the toilet door as I speak.

"Yea, we won't fill it completely" Saya responds.

"Actually, maybe we can just take a shower instead of filling it" Saeko stops setting the pool and turns to Saya.

"Can't we at least relax while taking a bath? We have been up all day..." Saya whines in a low tone.

"Also, no hot water" I respond after Saya... and both girls turn to stare at me.

"What? Water heating needs electricity. Maybe solar ones 'would' work, if you replace all the burnt wires and electronics..." I add up.

"... Ahh... crap. I, totally forgot about that..." Saya lowers her head, her mouth left slightly open and a sad frown on her face.

(You don't have to look 'that' dejected, you're making me feel bad for mentioning it now.)

"Well if you fill the pool, you can boil water in the stove and add it in. Cold and boiling will balance out to a medium temperature, and as it's relatively hot, the room temperature is also relatively h..."

"We're filling it up. I'm not taking a cold shower." Saya cuts me off as she folds her arms with a pout.

"Well do as you wish, I'll go set the beds" I respond as I walk past them.

"Huh? Can't we just place the sleeping bags before we go to sleep?" Saya asks as she turns to me with a raised eyebrow.

(Riiight, chundere here still don't know about the 'double bed'... oh boy)

"I... we got some inflatables back at the store, we can use them as mattresses" I respond as I turn around.

"Oh, I see. Yea, that does sound better than a plain sleeping bag..." Saya nods slightly as she lowers her head and folds her arms, seemingly in thought.

"B, But don't get any funny ideas! L..like sticking the beds next to each other..." Saya's voice, while it started relatively loud, kept decreasing in volume as she spoke, to the point that it ended with a whisper. The fact that she turned her head away, also didn't help.

"Yea... of course..." I responded with a deadpan voice, then turned to Saeko, who was touching her lips with her knuckles, a smile visible on her face as she looked at me. I think she was trying to hold herself back from giggling? I mean, good luck 'not' sticking the beds together when two of them are fused.

"Well, tell me if you need anything." I turn around and start walking.

"By the time you're done we might be taking a bath, the pool is nearly set up. So don't come down until we're done..." Saya turns to me, narrows her eyes as she puts her arms on her hips and leans her upper body towards me.

"Alright, you have clothes to change into?" I ask.

"Yea, I picked some from the car" Saya responds. I then turned to Saeko, and saw her nod at me.

"Well, I'll try not to come down for no reason.." And with a slight shrug, I start walking towards the hallway.

"Does wanting to take a stroll count as a reason?" I 'ask' as I turn around, only for Saya to puff her cheeks and narrow her eyes even more at me...

(Momentary deafness, activate.)

I turn around, and head towards the hallway. After I went up the stairs and reached the second floor, I took out the flashlight and looked around.

"Any wendigos around now?" I ask.

"Nope, just a fuming Saya downstairs." I add with a chuckle as I take off my bag, open it and take the pump out.

(Right, forgot to take the extra sleeping bags, the ones we'll use for the ground and as covers.)

I leave my stuff and head back downstairs, then go outside and straight to the humvee. Once there, I unlock it and take a couple of sleeping bags, as the group had left them behind before going over the bridge. Then, back to the second floor. After that, I set the two inflatables and lock the pump into the double one.

(Alright, time to get to work.)

What transpired, was the most boring moments of several days combined...

-Sometime later-

By the time I was done, I was pretty sure the girls were taking a bath downstairs. So I decided to wait upstairs...

(Wish I had a PSP or DS right now. Or my pc...)

I groaned lightly as I bumped the back of my head against the wall I was leaning on.

I had also taken off my equipment. Leg guards, arm guards, gloves, vest, guns, and was sitting with my back against the wall.

(What's taking them so long...)

I let out a sigh and closed my eyes...

(Then again, Saya was not wrong, we have been moving all day, so I won't be surprised if they decide to 'chill' in there. Even if Saya was supposed to be reluctant about sharing a bathroom in the anime... though that 'could' be because of Rei and her uhh, breast checking methods.)

I shake my head and get up, then head to the door.

(With how dark this room is, I'll end up falling asleep.)

I exit and stop by the stairs...

(... Better I wait here, if they are still taking a bath, Saya will chew me out if she sees me downstairs.)

With that, I sat on the steps...

(So, now what? After this we head to the Mansion? From the little that I saw, it was past the mall we stayed at... Hmm, guess once we

calm down we can sit around the map and make our next step...)

As I was thinking, I saw Saya walking past the small visible part of the hallway, heading towards the exit.

Her hair was down and was wearing a black sleeveless shirt, along with her school's green short skirt, plus actual sports shoes, I think the same ones she wore after Rika's house.

"Need something from outside?" I ask before she can exit, she turns her head to me.

"Somebody forgot to bring plates" She says as she folds her arms under her chest.

"Right, I think I saw some bento boxes in the car, inside the food crate, I'll go get 'em as I'm the one that forgot' em." I respond as I get up.

"Fine, I'll go outside for my hair to dry either way, then probably lie down for a bit..." Saya responds.

"Are you alright?" I ask as I walk up to her, She tilts her head questionably.

"Uhh, yea. I'm just tired, because of somebody, I ended up jumping into a river and then I had to walk all day" She answers with a smirk as she leans slightly towards me with her arms still folded.

"Wonder who's that idiot" I respond with a chuckle as I start heading towards the exit...

"I'll give you a hint, he always wears a stupid mask" She huffs as she starts walking behind me.

After going outside, Saya followed me all the way to the car in silence.

"I'm surprised you really didn't come down again after going up there..." Saya speaks up while waiting outside of the car. As I gathered our 'plates'.

"You're already treating me like crap most of the time Saya, I don't need it getting worse" I respond as I place the bento boxes next to me and close the crate.

"No I'm... it's, it's because you. It's your fault..." Saya starts stumbling her words as she glances around.

"Maybe it is, I ain't a knight in shining armor after all. Black tends to not shine a lot" I answer as I exit the car, close the door and lock it.

"By the way, here" I dig in my pocket and take out the hand creams I took from the supermarket.

"... Huh?" Saya just tilts her head as she keeps looking at the colorful plastic packages in my hand with a questioning expression...

"Wait, these are." As if the gears in her memory started to spin she lifted her head to me, her face even more weirded out.

"I promised I'd get you some in the police station" I respond as I extend my arm.

"I..." She stops in the middle of her sentence as she takes the items, and stays quiet.

"In any case, I'll hand these over, don't stay out too long, you might catch a cold" I put my hand on her head and ruffle her hair.

(Huh, that's weird, her hair felt a little 'too' wet.)

I walk a couple of steps and then turn round, Saya still rooted on the spot.

"Hey Saya." I call out to her, she jerks her shoulders and turns around, still looking at the ground.

"It might be better if you stay in the back alleyway, you don't know who might see you" I point with my head to the left as I speak. Saya, after a few seconds, nods and starts walking, her head still lowered...

(... She just turned really meek. Was this such an important thing?... I mean sure, I remembered a promise I made to her, but still.)

We then headed back to the back door in silence.

"Ahh, Naier..." Just as I was about to enter the door Saya spoke up, causing me to turn to her.

"..Ahh. N, nothing. Just, thanks" She stumbles on her words once more before bowing slightly.

"You are welcome" I respond as I turn around.

"A..also!" She spoke up again...

(... What's gotten into her.)

Turning around I find her with a flushed face.

"... N..nothing..." She answers as she keeps looking at the ground...

(You get points for trying.)

"Alright, if you need me, you know where to find me." I respond and turn around again.

With that. I walked back to the store, and on to the main room. Saeko was by the counter, looking over the now open stove with a ladle in her hand, more importantly though...

(And now I know why Saya turned weird right before the entrance...)

"You... didn't find clothes again?..." I 'ask'. Saeko, hearing my voice, turns to me.

She had her hair up in a ponytail and was wearing... uhh. A buttoned shirt that was left unbuttoned on the chest area, and that's all. I mean, that's all I could see, as it ended a little under her hips, so I could not actually see her underwear, in difference with every other outfit she wore so far...

"My body is still wet, I didn't want to get clothes we could use drenched, also, be careful not to slip on the water that's on the floor" She responds casually...

(Wet my a... wait. They did take towels right?)

I turn my head to the 'bathtub'. No towels there.

"Where are the towels?" I ask.

"We had towels?" She asks back.

(Didn't you look in the back of the car some time ago?!)

"In the back of the car, I picked some from the store too..." I respond as I turn to her.

"Ohh. I didn't see them" She answers casually with a slight shrug...

(... Didn't see them, my ass.)

"Ooook, uhhh. Brought these" I leave the bentos next to her on the counter.

"Thank you" She nods with a smile as she glances at the bentos I just placed on the counter.

And a couple of seconds later...

"... You know the only reason I'm fine with dressing like this, is because you are the only man that can see me." She keeps looking at the rice inside the metal pot as she speaks .

(Holy crap, she just switched to aggressive.)

"Didn't you stroll around with an apron?..." I ask.

"And a jacket that you gave me." She answers with a slight smile as she tilts her head and leaves the ladle in the boiling pot.

(Right)

"And, I really didn't have a choice back then, nothing fitted me." She stops speaking for a second and turns to look at me.

"So please, don't think of me as a harlot because of it. Ever since the pharmacy, your eye's are the only ones that I want on me." She takes a step towards me and places her hand on my chest then lowers her head again...

"And I'm willing to prove it to you. To give you everything I am, the moment you ask it of me." She lifts her face and locks her eyes on me, her mouth slightly open as her cheeks start to take a shade of red...

"Your heartbeat is rising..." she pushes her hand lightly against my chest as she keeps staring at me. I leaned towards her until my mask almost touched her nose...

"And your rice is burning" I lift my finger and point at the boiling pot.

"Ah!" Her eyes go wide as she instantly turns around and starts focusing on the jealous pot.

"Ohh, it's still ok. We really can't waste food now..." She lets out a small sigh as she closes her eyes, then opens them and keeps them in the pot, though the blush was still on her face.

(A little more and I seriously might have pushed her down, and honestly I don't think she would have even resisted... heartbeat rising my ass, she was actively seducing me...)

"I'm going to take that bath now" I respond as I turn around.

"Umm, you know I can't leave this room, the stove is here." She glances at me before looking back at the food.

"Once rice boils you can lower the temperature and leave it, no?" I tilt my head slightly as I turn to her.

"I thought your cooking ability was sandwiches" Saeko giggles slightly as she keeps looking at the pot.

"And pasta, this counts as pasta-like knowledge. To answer your question though..." I stop in the middle of my sentence and tap on my mask. Causing Saeko to turn and stare at me...

"Ehh I don't care, do as you wish" I respond as I raise my hands slightly.

"Naier. Are you teasing me?" She asks as she raises an eyebrow and tilts her head, a small smirk appearing on her face.

"Me? What would ever make you think of such a thing." I respond with a casual shrug as I turn around.

"Hmm, very well. I will do 'as I wish'" She replies. I turn to glance at her, only to see her still smirking at me...

"Try not to make Saya scream her lungs out..." I scratch the corner of my mask before turning around again...

(Well, that escalated quickly .)

With that over, for now at least. I headed back into the second floor to get a change of clothes out of my bag, only to remember that Saeko had taken them out, so instead. It was back to the car for me...

After getting some clothes... and some towels, I headed back to the store. Giving one towel to Saya in the process, who was still sitting

outside. And one to Saeko, who was still staring over the pot, that was now lid closed, and burning over a low flame. After she untied her hair and covered them with the towel, I headed to take a bath...

(I don't feel dirty at all. And I am supposed to be 'careful' on that type of stuff. But not taking one after the other two did is just, yea... no.)

By the time I was in the pool, Saeko was still over the pot...

(She ain't gonna move huh? O well...)

With that, time passed in silence. Until...

"And Naier, remember. No mask after the bath" Saeko speaks up from the other side of the curtain.

"Yea, no mask, Balaclava only, read you loud and clear" I respond with a chuckle as I glance at my mask that was on one of the rack's shelves... and after a few minutes of silence...

"... Why do you like covering your face so much?" She asks.

"Why do you like beating the shit out of people?" I ask back.

"... So you mean to tell me that if I wore a mask. It would excite you?" She asked once again.

(Right, forgot she actually gets uhh, wet, from killing stuff...)

"Uhh, no. I didn't mean it like that. Some people like guns, others like cars, I like helmets and masks." I respond.

"I see..." She then stays quiet... for about ten seconds...

"If the world somehow returns to normal. What are you going to do?" She shoots another question.

(Damn she's on a roll.)

"I got, no freaking idea" I answered.

"Do you want to return to your country?" She asks again.

"No" I answered flatly.

"Hmm, how come? You didn't like it there?" And yet another question.

(Yea, let's ignore the fact that leaving here means leaving both you and Saya behind, and that I have no memories of my own concerning 'my' country.)

"I was never one to get attached to a place, used to move a lot" I responded.

"So you would not care if you left Japan either?" Her voice sounded a bit different this time. A bit, forced.

"Ha, you think you're getting rid of me that easy? I'll probably stuff you in my bag if I'll end up leaving. Wonder if they allow Saekos on a plane." I respond with a small chuckle.

"You know you don't have to stuff me anywhere, I would come with you willingly, if you'd have me." She replies with a giggle.

"I'll keep that in mind" I answer as I stretch.

(Ok that should be nuff swimming.)

I get off the pool, dry myself and change to a new set of, same black clothes.

(... These are the new clothes right? Uhh, yea, the unfolded ones are the ones I wore.)

"Wonder if we can use the water in the pool to wash the clothes too, it doesn't look dirty. Is it ok to mix body shampoo with clothing shampoo?" I ask as I look at the foamy water in the pool.

"Hmm, I never used body shampoo to clean clothes in my house. It probably lacks the stain removal abilities of the clothing one, otherwise, I suppose I don't see a problem with it. As we are not using a washing machine which would probably be incompatible with body shampoo" Saeko replies.

"You are done?" She asks right after.

"Yea" I answered back.

"Could I ask you to come here for a minute then?" She asks back.

Without answering I exit the 'bathroom' and head to Saeko.

"What's up?" I ask as I stop next to her. She just turns to stare at me...

"Uhh..." And she keeps staring...

"Sorry, I just wanted to look at your face. It's a rare sight to see the Ninja penguin without his mask" She finally speaks up as she tilts her head with a warm smile.

"... I'm starting to think you were the one who started this whole penguin thing" I reply as I fold my arms. Saeko shakes her head.

"Shizuka, not me" She answers.

(Figures. She could be lying though, Shizuka is too easy of a target...)

After a short silence, with Saeko having her eyes locked to my face...

"Well, I'll start by washing my clothes, until the food is ready" I glance around before turning towards the pool behind me.

"It's ok, I can wash them together with mine." Saeko replies.

"Uhh, I'm still taking care of my mask myself, not because I think you might try to hide it or something, honest" I glance back at her and lift both arms to my head.

"Saw right through my plan, shoot" She replies in a playful manner as she tilts her head and presses her finger on the corner of her lips.

With that, I move back to the pool and take my mask, which I left on the display rack.

(The mask itself should be easy to clean, the balaclava, guess we'll see. Maybe I should start wearing the hood, as it will stop blood from sticking on the balaclava. Also cool and tryhard factor plus ten.)

"Do we even have clothing detergent?" I ask as I dip the mask in the pool.

"Hmm, good question, I don't think I saw any in the car" Saeko replies.

"Oh well, guess we stick with shampoo" I shrug slightly and continue.

Saeko did not speak afterward. Yet, there was something else on my mind now.

(Still, is Saeko really that dependent on me? Or she's trying to lead me on? Even with Takashi she was not 'that' assertive. And it's obvious in the anime that she's in love with him to the point of 'giving him everything she is'.)

I stop scrubbing the mask and lift it to head height...

(Uhh, must you always think like everybody is out to get you? Maybe Saeko does like you to the point of being even more assertive than she was with Takashi...)

I shake my head and take the mask and balaclava, then start heading towards the exit. Once out, I turn to my left to see Saya with her back to me.

"Hey, you know where I can hang clothes to dry?" I ask as I walk up to her.

"Huh, you can leave them on the c..." She turns around as she speaks, only to stop in the middle of her sentence after turning to face me, her eyes frozen wide open and her mouth slightly ajar.

"Hello?" I tilt my head slightly as I keep looking at her.

"C... car" Saya squeaks, before quickly putting her hand over her mouth, slightly lowering her blushing face.

"M, my hair dried, I'm going inside" She then zoomed past me before I could even reply.

(... Is my face that amazing to look at? I always thought I was average to meh looking...)

I then look at my mask.

(Weird, oh well.)

After reaching the car, I leave the mask on the front bumper and hang the balaclava on the car's antenna, then turn to look at the sky.

(It's getting dark. Hmm, I also still have to ask Saya what she did with our night shifts.)

With that, I went back to the store. To find both Saya and Saeko by the counter.

Hearing me enter the room, Saeko turns to me.

"Food is ready" She says with a smile.

"Don't remember the last time I had cooked food" I respond as I walk up to them.

"Yea, feels like the first day of the outbreak was months ago..." Saya keeps looking into the metal pot as she speaks.

(I meant before the outbreak as well, as I was all buns and fast food long before day Z. Don't need to tell them that though, for one Saya will definitely use it as an excuse to poke her finger to my face.)

"It will be a bit hot, but the tuna I mixed with the herbs will help cool it down faster" Saeko starts placing rice in the bentos as she speaks.

"Actually, what herbs did I bring?" I ask as I turn to look at the bowl that had the tuna in.

"Hmm? Dill. You picked it randomly?" Saeko asks as she turns to look at me.

"What. naawww, of course I didn't pick it randomly..." I respond as I glance around, Saeko lifting an eyebrow to my obvious lie.

"Is Dill good with tuna?" I ask after a few seconds of silence. Saeko lowers her head and closes her eyes as she starts giggling..

"Yes, Dill is usually good with any seafood." She answers as she opens her eyes and turns to look at me again.

"I would seriously kick you if you had managed to ruin good food" Saya folds her arms and keeps looking at the rice as she speaks.

(Say it to ma face. Or you're still blushing?)

After Saya's remark, we stayed quiet while Saeko prepared the three bentos, aka, plates.

"Alright, food is ready" Saeko, upon speaking, lets go of the kitchen utensils and leans back, then turns to me.

"Where are we going to eat?" She asks.

"Anywhere we want, personally, I'm eating here" I respond as I sit on the counter, turning around in the process, then tap it with both hands.

Saeko nods and takes a bento on each hand, then walks up to me, hands me one, and sits next to me. Then scoots even closer, to the point that her leg was touching mine. Actually screw that, she was literally leaning on me...

And uhh, guess who was looking like an extra grumpy cat now. Saya, with the towel still around her shoulders, got her bento. Then sat on the counter, albeit a little further from me and Saeko...

"I could not find any flavored tuna, hope you don't mind it plain" I take my swiss knife and open the 'fork'.

Just as I was about to dig the fork into the rice I realized something.

(Wait, I have two Japanese people with me, got to 'Thank for the food' first. Nearly started out of habit, as I never did that when I was by myself, though now I really got to 'thank' for the food, Saeko made it after all.)

I close the fork and leave it next to me.

"Thanks for the food" As I start speaking, Saeko and Saya speak up with me in unison.

"Actually, where did you two put your equipment?" I ask as we start eating.

"Behind you" Saya answers flatly as she points her chopsticks behind her without lifting her head.

"Humm, Naier, can I ask for a favor ?" Saeko, who was still leaning on me, turned her head to me. I glance at her, nod...

She then brings her chopsticks, which had a bite-sized chunk of her food, close to my face... and stops...

(You gotta be pulling my leg)

I glance at the chopsticks, then at the smiling Saeko. Then back at the sticks, and back at Saeko...

"I always wondered how it feels to do this, hope I'm not making you feel uncomfortable" Saeko, seeing my dead response speaks up.

(Ohh yeah, we cool, just that I feel an epic glare on my back right now.)

"I guess, I'll admit I'm not a big fan of mussy stuff like that" I respond and open my mouth slightly.

Saeko did not miss her chance and placed the chopsticks in my mouth with a slight giggle.

"Hum, for not being a fan, you sure caved in fast. Even if she did it wrong..." I hear a whining voice behind me seconds later.

"Ohh, you know of a correct method?" Saeko glances past me and she raises an eyebrow, a slight smirk on her face.

"Why, is there a reason I should not?" I hear the same whining voice behind me respond, in a slightly higher tone this time.

(In other words. She practiced this even while Takashi was giving her absolutely no attention?... That's, actually kind of sad...)

"Hum, fine, if you don't believe me I'll show you." I hear Saya respond as she slides off the counter and comes to sit next to me, opposite of Saeko.

(... Ok, acknowledge this for a moment, I have both Saya and Saeko next to me, hand-feeding me? The actual fark is happening here.)

"Hey idiot, open your mouth. I, I can't show her how to do it if you're being an idiot" Saya starts speaking with a serious face, I need not mention that her face was also beet red do I ?...

Not wanting to anger the already ticking time bomb next to me I open my mouth. And Saya moves her hand towards my mouth. Correction, her slightly shaking hand to my mouth.

(... Her hand is seriously shaking right now?)

Also another thing I noticed. Her lips curved up to a smile, even if it was momentarily, before quickly turning back into 'grumpy cat' mode.

"Hmm, so like that?" I barely managed to swallow as Saeko brought her chopsticks to my face...

(Ok, I have a bad feeling about this.)

I open my mouth nonetheless...

"No, you're doing wrong, it's like this" Saya responds as she brings her own chopsticks to my face again... only for...

"I see, then it's like this?" Saeko to continue the combo...

This... went on for some time...

To the point that I was actually full.

(They will seriously choke me here)

I leave the swiss knife/fork on the bento, and creep my hands behind Saeko's and Saya's neck, then grab them both at the same time.

Saya lets out a yelp and closes her eyes for a few seconds, Saeko jerks her shoulders slightly and opens her mouth a bit, but otherwise leaves her eyes locked on me.

"First, You will choke me like this, second, if you keep stuffing my face with your food, you'll empty your bentos without actually eating anything, third..." I let go of both of them, take my fork and dig into my bento, then split my food into two portions.

"This is yours" I point the right portion to Saya.

"This is yours" I point the left portion to Saeko.

"Ok?" I ask. Both girls nod after a few seconds, with a rather dumbfounded expression.

"I apologize, I got a bit carried away" Saeko, with a smile still plastered on her face, nods slightly and brings her chopsticks over my bento.

"I was just showing her..." Saya follows up after Saeko, though her face had a blushing pout instead.

(Sure you were Miss 'I'll show you how it's done'.)

I decided to not say that out loud though, our blushing chundere seemed flustered enough as it is.

The rest of our dinner went on without any 'surprises'. And by the time we were done, the place had also visibly gotten darker.

"Ok, I'll deal with the plates, as we have to wash them in the bathroom." I speak up as I get off the counter.

"I'll deal with the clothes then" Saeko nods at me as she also gets off the table, she had also taken the towel off her hair some time ago.

"I will..." Saya puts her hand over her mouth and stretches with a yawn in the middle of her sentence.

"Sorry..." She adds right after as she lifts her glasses and rubs her eyes with both hands.

"You can go upstairs to sleep if you want, or help Saeko. Washing clothes will take longer than washing bentos and pots obviously" I turn to look at Saya as I speak.

"I'll help Saeko..." She responds as she also gets off the counter with a rather sleepy expression.

With that, I moved to the gas chamber...

(God I need an actual gas mask for this place.)

After getting all the cutlery there, I start scrubbing the bentos with a sponge I found on the store's shelves...

(At least the girls didn't oppose me when I said that I'll leave the door open. Still, this place had sponges and dishwashing soap, but no clothing detergent...)

-Several nose agonizing minutes later-

(Ok, done, I'm outa here, before I pass out.)

I walk out of the bathroom with the bentos, the cooking utensils and pots inside them.

"I'm done" I speak up as I get near the girls.

"We need some more time" Saeko responds. Saya just kept her head down, not speaking, much less reacting.

"Uhh, Saya you ok?" I ask as I lean towards her.

"A... I'm fine.." She responds with her head still lowered...

(...'something' definitely happened.)

Just as I was about to turn my head to Saeko.

"She just got a bit, too focused washing your..."

"S... shut up!" Saya darts her head to Saeko as she cuts her off, her face taking all new levels of red.

(Right... I did leave my old clothes here...)

Saya glances at me a couple of times before darting her head back down to the pool...

"We can't leave unwashed clothes" She mumbles in a low tone.

"I see, thanks Saya. I'm going to let these dry outside" I respond as I walk past them.

"Since you had more to do than me, once you're done I will deal with emptying the pool outside" I add up as I stop for a second and turn around, Saeko looks at me and nods, Saya didn't react.

(And she has yet to see the beds too huh?...)

With that thought, I headed to the car and left everything on it, then went back to the girls, where I waited for them to finish with the clothes while I was waiting on the counter, as they didn't let me join in.

And several minutes later...

"Hmm, emptying the pool will take some time, we should start emptying it before you two are finished" I hop off the counter as I speak and walk up to them. Then, I took the hose and went to the smelly bathroom, hopefully for what would be the last time for today.

(Ok, I should fill both sides with water and then leave one side in the pool, the other on the ground outside, the elevated position of the pool will siphon the water out.)

With that, I take the orange attachment out, open the faucet and fill the hose with water until it's 'full'. Blocking both hose exits with my thumbs I head back to the pool, leave one side there and with the other side in my hand, I head outside and leave the hose to the ground. Water instantly pouring out...

Several seconds later, water was still coming out, meaning that all I had to do now is wait. I lean my back against the wall and take a deep breath.

(Now we wait...)

I looked up in the sky that was quickly losing its orange coloring. Then looked back down, at the two sides that the alleyway ended.

(The side that does not have the car was already barricaded, and that flimsy ass barricade we have by the car should hold any corpses that manage to wander there, we'll also close the back door, as it opens towards the outside, corpses will need to break it down, if they manage to get this far...

To be honest though, the idea of seeing corpses popping from the corners right now is freaking me out a bit. Is it because I feel more vulnerable now that I accepted that I am in a 'safe' spot? Sure I'm not wearing my gear and don't have my gun, but I didn't have these in the school either. I guess, the idea of no 'safe place' really existing is what's actually freaking me out...

Or that Saeko and Saya are totally defenseless right now. Both of them left their gear behind the counter after taking a bath...)

I must have lost track of time, as thankfully nothing happened while I was waiting, until Saeko and Saya walked outside with the clothes on their hands.

"The pool is almost empty, we will go hang these, by the time we're done the pool should be empty" Saeko speaks up as she glances behind her. Then turns to head towards the car with Saya.

(Ok, let's get this over with.)

I nod, push myself off the wall and head back to the pool to find it almost empty.

(Hmm, might as well brush my teeth while I'm waiting.)

I back away from the pool and head to my bag that I left upstairs, then take three toothbrushes and a tube of toothpaste before heading back down. After sitting on the counter I open one of the sealed brushes, put some toothpaste and start brushing while mindlessly staring at the pool. Until I heard footsteps to my left.

"Ughh, right. I almost forgot I got to brush my teeth" I hear Saya groan with a sleepy face. She drags her feet over to her bag behind the counter and takes her toothbrush.

"Can I have toothpaste?" She asks as she extends her hand to me, moving to the front of the counter in the process..

"Uhh, where did you get water?" She asks again as I give it to her, I respond by shaking my head.

"Ahh, I don't have my bag with me, it's in the car" I hear Saeko speak up right after. I turn to her and extend one of the sealed toothbrushes.

"Oh, thank you" She smiles at me and takes it, then takes the toothpaste from Saya, who looked like about to fall asleep with the brush in her mouth...

Saeko sat on the counter right after, again, excessively close to me. She then pleased her head on my shoulder and closed her eyes as she continued the monotonous task...

Saya, who decided not to sit on the counter, was casually looking around. Until her sight landed on me and Saeko. Probably due to her being sleepy, she didn't really react and turned to look away. Only to dart her head back to me as her sleepy eyes snapped open and her face took one glorious frown.

(Well, I'm actually done. So as much as I like this, Saya seems about ready to blow now that she can't tell me what a pervert I am.)

I tap lightly on Saeko's shoulder, who shakes her head slightly before opening her eyes, she then looks around before closing them again, sitting back to a normal posture in the process. I then hop off the counter and head to the pool before spitting whatever was in my mouth.

(Some doctors say it's better not to rinse after brushing, guess we'll find out now. In a world that brushing may actually have no point because nobody can get bad teeth.)

I chuckle slightly and turn around.

"I'll go close the door and head up" I point to my right as I start walking. Both girls reply with a silent nod.

So, after closing the door, I headed to the second floor, and looked at the beds...

(Think Saya is sleepy enough to not freak out?...)

I walk up to Saya's bed and push it a bit closer to the double bed with my foot.

(Nahh, will definitely freak out.)

I then head back to my bag, take my equipment and leave 'em over the 'head' of the double bed. Then kneel down and take the handgun out of the holster, check the safety and leave it next to everything else, along with the Scar-H. After that, I take off my shoes and walk up on the bed before lying down, using an extra sleeping bag as a pillow while passing my right arm under my head.

A couple of seconds later, I hear footsteps to my left.

"Uhh, finally, we get to sleep on something that isn't a cold hard floor. Still, won't these cause a lot of no..." I hear Saya stop in the middle of her sentence...

"Uhh, there are only two beds here..." She adds up in a low tone as she walks into the room. And after getting to the 'leg' section of the double bed and looking at both beds, she puts two and two together, or well, two and one.

"T... that's a d... dobule bed..." Saya's voice kept losing strength as she kept staring at the bed with wide eyes.

"H..hey pervert! W... what exactly you are trying to do?!" She then turns her sight to me as she raises her voice.

"He is not trying to do anything, I ask for this" Saeko walks up to the bed, then sits on the corner.

"W..whaa..." Saya then turned to Saeko, her voice started to lose power again, to the point that I could not really hear it.

"Seeing as you either keep calling me an idiot or pervert. I figured you would try to either eat my liver, or force me to sleep in the pool if I got a bed for three people, so I got one different for you" I point at the ceiling, then at the single bed that was a little further off to my right.

"Huh? N, No I... I..." Saya just kept glancing between 'her' bed and the double bed.

"Umm, Naier, you will sleep with your clothes?" Saeko, who I had the feeling was enjoying this, asks right after as she keeps leaning on her hand.

"Last thing I need is running around half-naked in case of an emergency. And that's what will happen if we wake up in the middle of an emergency" I reply as I turn to Saeko.

"I see, I guess that does make sense" She replies as she closes her eyes and stretches.

"S..so, you two will. Sleep... together?" Saya asks, still standing in the same place like a scarecrow...

(It actually does sound unreal now that she mentions it.)

"Yes" Saeko answers flatly as she lies down next to me, then hugs my arm and nuzzles her head right next to my neck, before tightening her hug on my arm and placing her leg on me. Then, with a long sigh, she stops moving...

Saya didn't move, she just stared at the bed...

(She's going to start kicking me now or something?...)

"B... but I... I.." Saya's own voice got cut by a short hiccup. Looking at her, I see that she keeps rubbing right under her eyes...

(Wait, she's crying? Uhh, What the fuck am I fucking asking? She jumped into the fucking river with me, and her being her, she obviously would not say why she 'really' did it...")

"Saya, I'm trying to do what both of you ask of me. I already told you that I'm happy that you decided to come with me, so let me just ask you something..." I raise myself slightly until I can lean on my elbow and stop talking, until Saya looks at me.

"Are you 'really' asking what you want from me?" I 'ask' as I keep looking at her. She did not reply, she just slowly folded her arms under her chest and looked away.

After a few seconds I look back up the ceiling.

(Ok, what I'm doing here is as wrong as it gets if looking at it from their side, might as well use everything I have.)

"Did you ever tell Takashi that you liked him?" I ask as I keep looking at the ceiling.

"Huh... wh..wha..."

"Would things have been different between him and you had you told him so, instead of acting like you are constantly annoyed with him?" I cut her off.

"What makes you think I liked him..." I hear Saya ask.

"You were pretty bad at hiding your displeasure when he went after Rei on the bus, or honestly anything that had him doing things for Rei" I answered.

"T, that's because she dumped him before the outbreak for his best friend! She didn't deserve him back..." Saya answers back, her voice starting off strong, but ending with a whisper.

"Probably, but she decided to act on what she really wanted. Did you?" I ask back. And got no response... and after a few seconds.

"No matter what happens with Saya, I'll still want you with me. That's what I told Saeko. The opposite, also counts for you Saya. Immoral, bad, or stupid as it is, it's the choice 'I' wanted to make. The rest of that choice, is yours" I add up as I close my eyes and lie back down.

Saeko didn't react to all of this, I don't know if she decided to not intervene, or if she honestly fell asleep this fast...

(Even if she decides to keep her distance from me. I hope this whole chat right now helps her on making better decisions later on in 'this' type of thing. I mean I was not lying about her and Takashi, if she was not such a stick in the mud with him and actually showed him some affection, she could have won him over, or have a way higher chance of doing so at least...)

And then, I heard Saya move, only to abruptly stop a second later. Then start again, then once again stop...

(Huh? What is she...)

I didn't even manage to finish that thought, and I felt the bed move while at the same time, something 'crashed' on the right side of my chest.

Opening my eyes, I saw the top part of a pink-haired head at the point of impact...

"You're horrible..." The pink-haired head whines in a low tone.

"I know" I respond as I bring my hand on it and ruffle its hair.

"Uhh, speaking of horrible, who's on the first night shift" I ask.

"You..." Saya responds without moving her head.

"Ok, the second?" I ask again.

"You..." She answers, this time in a lower tone...

"... The third..." I ask one final time...

"... You..." Saya replies in an even lower tone.

(Figures...)

"Well, guess I better get to work then." I respond as I try to get up, only for Saya to cling on to me with a short whine.

(Ohh this is going to be a loong night...)

A path to choose

"Plug the hole dammit!" The man mounted on the raptor shouts. Clad from head to toe in high tech armor.

"I'm trying! Frigging plesiosaur keeps clipping me back!" I shouted back as I kept trying to reach the cracked window. While the head of a plesiosaur, that had clipped through the metal wall next to it, kept pushing me back every time I got near the window.

"I swear, if we lose this base because of the plesi, I'm fucking feeding it to a level two troodon! And then I'm shotgun-blasting that troodon in the face!" The man shouts once again.

"Don't you fucking dare use the shotgun! Or I'm selling your spleen for the metal ingots!" I shout back as I keep running towards the window. The level of the water was well over my waist by now...

"Dude! We have tek gear and an underwater base! Why do you care about metal ingots so much!?" The guy shouts.

"I don't care! You will NOT waste metal! And that's finaagrrllll..." Before I could finish, my head was underwater. I reflexively closed my eyes as I got violently pushed away...

By the next time I opened my eyes. All I could see, was a deep dark blue. And as I kept looking around, I saw them. Giant tentacles, a lot of them. Creeping out from the darkness to my left.

"Fuuuuugrrll! Sqiiiiiiiiidrrll!" I quickly start swimming to my right as I scream in panic, trying to get away from the slithering tentacles that were closing in.

Yet, in the flash of a moment, they were in front of me, warping around me and forcefully pulling me back. Then, they turned me around, bringing me face to face with a giant squid...

(Welp I'm ded, at least I don't have any ascendant gear on me)

And as the squid drew me closer to itself it... giggled in a female voice?

(... Wait wut?)

Before I could even analyze what I just heard, the squid was grinding me against its mantle. It's giant eye squinted in a happy expression as it occasionally gave off a rather soft, feminine growl...

(Ok, this is weird, in so many ways. I never had a problem with 'monster girls'. But this is fuking absurd)

And as things could not get any weirder. A mosasaur appeared...

"H,hey! What are you doing!" The mosasaur speaks up, again with a feminine voice...

"Hmm, the same thing you were doing when I got back..." The squid replies.

"W, well I'm back now, so stop it" The mosasaur whines.

"Ohh? You are not going to tell me that you were just half asleep back then?" The squid asks with a slight giggle.

"... I'm. What's the point of hiding what I want?" The mosasaur asks back. The squid giggles back as an answer.

"W, what's so funny?" The mosasaur asks with a flustered voice.

"I see you are taking his words to heart" The squid answers back.

"... You, were awake, weren't you?" The mosasaur asks once again.

"Yes, I wanted to have as much time as I could next to him, before falling asleep. After all, we will be walking all day again" The squid answers back as I feel it's tentacles tighten around me.

(Wait, squids can walk?)

And just as I was thinking that, my sight turned blurry. I close my eyes and shake my head as I feel my brain clearing up.

The next time I opened my eyes, I found Saeko on my right, nuzzling up against my neck.

"H,hey!" I hear another voice to my left. Shifting my sight, I see Saya, dressed in her 'After Rika's house' outfit. The one with the white jacket, black shirt, and green school skirt, her hair was also tied into twin-tails. Then again, that jacket was all she was missing to match the outfit yesterday, and the twin-tails.

Saeko, from what I could see at least, being that her head was blocking most of my view, was still wearing that buttoned shirt.

I shake my head and move my hand to my face, covering my eyes.

"Hum, and look who's finally up..." I heard Saya say as she walked up to me.

"Had fun sleeping with two girls at the same time idiot?" She asks with a slight pout as she kneels down next to me.

"Uhh, what? Wait, who was on night guard, no wait, I was on night guard" I shake my head as I try to get up, something that proved to be impossible with Saeko weighing me down.

"Ughh, are you for real? That's all you have to say? Idiot." She replies as she lightly jabs at my sides.

"Oi, what gives" I bend my body slightly, before jabbing right back at her. She lets out a rather cute short yelp... Before she starts to 'rapid fire' her jabs at me as a retaliation. Something that I was not really able to defend against because Saeko had 'taken over' half of my body.

"Ah! Aaaa, Ok ok ok you win you win, stapstapstap" I start waving my only free arm as I try to avoid Saya's relentless assault. It did wake me up at least..

"Hum, serves you right..." Saya puffs her cheeks as she finally stops jabbing me.

"But seriously, who was on night guard?" I ask the moment I manage to catch my breath.

Saya looks at me for a couple of seconds, before letting out a sigh.

"Saeko took the first round, I took the second, I was actually coming back from it now" Saya finally replies.

"I see, so it's my turn now, feels like I slept for ages to be honest" I nod slightly as I rub my eyes.

"Because you did, we decided to cut the shifts to two..." Saya glances away as she folds her arms.

"Huh? Why?" I ask as I lift an eyebrow.

"Because we wanted to spend more time with you, so we decided to split your shift between us" I hear a new voice to my right, Saeko's.

I turned my head slightly to my right, to see that Saeko was still with her eyes closed, her nose almost touching my neck. Then, I turn back to Saya. She just looked at me for a couple of seconds before glancing away.

"Y, you better be grateful..." She says with a pout as she keeps her arms folded under her chest.

(Oh? She is not denying it?)

"I am" I replied with the most honest voice I could muster, considering the situation.

"Hum, well, you better get your lazy butt off the bed, the sun has been up for quite some time now..." She responds as she gets up and starts walking towards the door. Only to stop midway.

"And hurry up idiot, your food will get cold..." She adds without turning around, then exits the room with a rather hasty pace.

(... Wait, Saya can cook?)

As I was thinking that, I felt two hands wrapping around my neck.

"Naier, girls can get jealous if you're paying attention to others but not them..." I hear a female whisper to my ear.

Turning my head to the right, I find Saeko gazing at me with a smile. Her head still resting on the pillow, aka the sleeping bag.

"Good morning" She spoke up again the moment she locked eyes with me.

"Morning Saeko" I respond as I turn my whole body towards her.

"Slept well?" I ask right after.

Saeko giggles, closes her eyes and slides up closer to me, before bumping her head against my chest.

"This must be the very first time in my life, that I don't want to get off my bed" She replies with a small sigh.

I silently placed my hand to her head, then ran it along her hair.

We stayed like that for a couple of minutes, up to the point that I felt that I would honestly fall asleep again...

"Uhh, we really should get up..." I groan as I bring my hand to my face. Saeko didn't respond.

"Ey, you fell asleep again?" I ask as I put my hand on her shoulder and shake her lightly. The only reaction I got from her was a soft moan...

(If I poke her now, will she reflexively karate chop my throat or something?... Ah fuck it)

I slowly bring my finger up to Saeko's cheek, and poke it. She groans a bit as she tries to 'hide' her face between me and the bed.

"Oi, you fell asleep again?" I poke at her cheek again. Saeko giggles slightly, but stays otherwise motionless.

"Maybe if I had a good morning kiss, instead of cheek poking. It would help me wake up." Saeko whispers with a smile, her eyes still closed.

(Oh, really?)

Without answering, I lean my upper body slightly back and run my finger along her cheek, before stopping it under her chin. Pushing her chin up, I aligned her face with mine. Saeko kept her eyes closed during all this, yet, I could see a visible blush appearing on her cheeks, and her mouth was also very slightly open...

(With such a deep blush, I'd say that she's actually expecting something)

I bring myself forward, and press my lips against hers. Saeko almost instantly starts 'pushing' her face against mine. And after a couple of seconds, I back off and gaze at Saeko as she finally opened her eyes.

"Come on, let's go" I move my hand to the top of her head and ruffle her hair, Saeko nods with a smile as she closes her eyes for a few seconds.

And with that. I get up, take my gear, and head downstairs, where I found Saya sitting on the counter, bento on one hand, chopsticks in the other, looking towards the pool.

"I should have taken the first shift..." Saya whines while still looking at the pool, bringing the chopsticks to her mouth.

"She got more time with him compared to me now..." She says in a low tone after swallowing.

"What?" I 'ask' as I start walking towards her. Causing Saya to turn towards me.

"Finally. You certainly took your sweet time getting up" She responds with a slight pout.

"Guess I was more tired than I thought" I respond as I stop next to her and spot two more bentos next to her, along with a set of chopsticks and my swiss knife.

"Well don't blame me if it's cold now" She turns her towards her own bento before she starts eating again.

I nod and pick one of the two extra bentos that laid next to her along with the swiss knife.

(Hmm, She made these? Compared to Saeko's, they look way more, sloppy. For the lack of a better term)

And take then, I take a bite.

(Ohh? It's actually pretty good)

"You just thought that it's weird that I can cook, didn't you..." Saya speaks up as she turns to me with a frown, narrowing her eyes in the process.

"Well, I thought that you'd have people that cooked for you in your house. Not you as you, but your whole family" I respond as I turn to

her.

"And even if I did, does that mean that I should not be allowed to learn how to cook if I want to?" She asks again, the frown still on her face.

"No, of course I didn't mean it like that Saya. I just didn't take you for a person who would spend time learning something without a reason" I respond as I glance at my bento.

"Hum, and what makes you think I had no reason" Saya responds as she turns back to her food, bringing her chopsticks to her mouth.

"So you had a reason? Heh, what was it? You learned how to cook so you can bring homemade food to Takashi or something?" I ask with a slight chuckle as I turn to her.

Saya instantly darts her head to me, her eyes going as wide as they could get. While her cheeks started to blush...

"Wait... for real?" I ask again as I raise an eyebrow and tilt my head.

"S... shut up..." She glanced around before quickly turning back to her food.

(Holy crabs Saya. The work you've put in for Takashi is like successfully making a supercar from the ground up, while forgetting to add the frigging wheels. Seeing as you failed on the most basic part of being kind to him...)

"Well, his loss" I shrug slightly as I start eating.

And as I bring the fork close to my face, Saeko comes down the stairs, looking completely awake.

"Good morning" She says as she walks up to us.

"Morning..." Saya mumbles as she keeps looking at her bento.

Saeko then walks up next to me, takes the third bento, and sits next to me.

"By the way. We, we have to set another rule." Saya speaks up just as Saeko took a seat. Causing both of us to turn to her.

"Taking turns..." She says right after with a low tone as she keeps looking at her bento.

"Taking what?" I ask as I tilt my head.

"Sleeping on the double bed, we will take turns sleeping on it" Saya adds as she glances at me.

"It's too packed when all three of us are on it..." She adds right after.

"Well, it is supposed to be for two people after all" I respond as I leave the bento on my legs and fold my arms.

"Makes sense. So, how will we 'take turns'?" Saeko adds as she tilts her head.

"Me or you will sleep on the single bed today, the other one will sleep on it the day after" Saya responds as she turns to stare at Saeko.

"And I will sleep there on the third day?" I ask.

"N, no. You, you are the leader. So you need to always be in top shape. So you will only sleep on the double one" Saya glances around as she answers.

(... Ohh, sneaky snek is trying to be sneaky. Especially considering that the single bed was actually way more expensive. But whatever, hell knows I don't mind this 'setup'...)

"I took the first shift, so I'm going to take the first turn" Saya adds right after.

"Very well" Saeko responds as she closes her eyes, leaves the bento next to her, and stretches.

"Also, Naier" Saya then turns her focus to me. And the moment she saw me looking at her.

"I looked at the map for a bit, I have a couple of paths set up that we can take to reach the mansion, once we're ready, look at them and tell me which one you think we should take" She adds as she keeps fiddling with the rice in the bento with the chopsticks.

"Good idea, we'll check em once we're done here" I respond as I nod.

"By the way, Naier..." Just as I finish speaking, Saeko speaks up. Turning my head around I find her staring at me.

"You have not forgotten about my weapon training, have you?" She asks.

"Nope, after you're finished eating, change to your normal uhh, gear. And we'll start" I respond as I point at her bento.

"Alright, I will change after I have finished, if what I am wearing now bothers you" Saeko responds as she looks at her half-buttoned shirt...

(Oh yea, ignore the fact that your boobs are sixty-five percent visible with that shirt that you left unbuttoned, I need to focus on the gun, not your boobs. Hmm, better if I don't actually say that, Saya will probably go ballistic on me if she hears that)

"Better to show you how to use it while you're wearing the equipment that you'll actually use with it" I respond as I start eating. Saeko giggles slightly before nodding...

(Giggling aren't you, bet you knew exactly 'why' I'm telling you to change...)

With that out of the way, we ate in relative silence...

Though I do have to admit, both girls looked to be in higher spirits compared to yesterday.

After we were done, Saeko took the bentos to the sink in the bathroom, while I headed to the car to get the first part of my 'outfit'. Getting there though... I came to a terrifying realization...

"Were, the fuck, is, my, mask..." I narrow my eyes as I look at the car's front bumper.

I kneel down and look under the Humvee, nothing. Unlocked the car and looked inside, nada...

(The balaclava is missing too, and I pretty much stabbed it through the antenna. I smell treason)

I turn around and start heading back towards the back door.

(One of the two yanked it? Hmm, question is, who? Both were pretty much demanding to take it off...)

With that thought, I return to the store's main room, to find Saya with her back turned to me, disassembling the hard plastic pool.

(How do I go about this? Both of them 'might' have taken it...)

As I was thinking, Saya turns around and spots me.

"What are you standing there for?" She asks as she tilts her head.

"Oh, nothing. Just thinking how both of you will be toast if I don't get my mask back in less than ten minutes." I respond with a deadpan face.

"W, what?" Saya keeps staring at me for a couple of seconds...

"What makes you think one of us took it" She asks as her eyebrows curve into a frown.

"The mask was in the inside part of the barricade, if a random survivor passed, fat chance they jumped over to just take the mask, the balaclava is missing too, and it's impossible for it to 'fall' as it was stabbed through the antenna, which was still intact." I answer as I fold my arms.

"Well I didn't take it" Saya also folds her arms as she leans her upper body towards me, flat out denying her involvement.

Just then, I saw the door to my right open, the one that led to the bathroom. Saeko walked out with the bentos on her hands, she then closed the door with her leg and took a deep breath. After that she turned to us, tilting her head the moment she realized that we were both staring at her.

"Is, there something wrong?" She asks.

"Idiot here is saying that one of us hid his stupid mask" Saya responds as puts her arms on her hips and turns to glance at me.

"You can't find it?" Saeko asks as she turns to me.

"I wouldn't be asking you two if I could find it" I respond as I tilt my head.

"Want me to help you look?" She asks right after.

"You do realize that you are a suspect too don't you, you voted against it along with Saya after all" I answer as with a slight one-sided smirk. Saeko responds with a slight giggle.

"Of course, I understand." She answers as she smiles back at me.

"You can search all my belongings if you want to, I don't mind" She adds right after as she keeps looking at me.

"Well seeing as both of you deny it, either I got a ninja stalker, or one of you is pulling my leg" I respond as I look towards the ceiling then turn to look back at the girls...

"So, I'm going to ask again one last time, who yinked my mask. If I get an answer now, I'll leave it at that. " I ask again as I turn to look at the two staring girls... No response.

"Nothing?... Come on corpses didn't take it, I'd rather know that one of you took it instead of coming to the conclusion that an alive person, that was not from our group, came this close to us without us realizing." I tilt my head as I keep looking at the two girls.

"If it was a person, why would they just steal the mask and leave?" Saya asks right after.

"It's far enough to be safe, but close enough to show that they can be a threat" I respond.

"Aren't you overthinking this a little bit Naier?" Saeko was the next one to speak.

(Overthinking? Sweetheart, I went full Spec Ops in order to hide a bat in a vent. A bat, in a vent.)

"If it means I'll avoid seeing you two getting hurt, then yes, I am overthinking this. Last thing I need is waking up with a gun pointed at my head and hoping that the one holding it ain't a damn rapist" I respond as I take turns looking at them. Both of them just stood there, staring at me... Until Saya looked away with a sigh.

"We can't even pull a little prank without you blowing it out of proportion..." She groans as she keeps looking away.

"I have your stupid mask, stop freaking out, nobody is after us..." She adds up as she turns to me while folding her arms. Saeko just lowered her head slightly and walked past me, though, I could see a smile on her face.

"I am sorry, I didn't mean to make you worry. We were actually both in this" She says as she leaves the bentos on the table.

"But, I am happy to know that you care about me this much. It means a lot to me" Saeko adds as she turns around to look at me with a warm smile.

Saya then walked, or pretty much stomped, her way to the counter. Went behind it, and took her bag. After opening it, she pulled my mask and balaclava out and left them on the counter...

I walk up to the counter and take my stuff.

"And now I'm definitely never taking it off again" I say as I wear my headgear back on.

"Hey, it was just a joke idiot. We won't do it again...." Saya responds with a slight pout as she narrows her eyes at me.

"Hmm, we'll see. For now, Saeko, please get dressed, Saya check that we didn't leave anything behind. I will go to the second floor to get my gear and deal with the inflatables" I respond as I turn to walk towards the hallway.

"And I had it all planned out so perfectly. Stupid idiot" I hear Saya whisper behind me.

(She had the what what now?)

Ignoring Saya's last statement I head back to the second floor. There, I wore the rest of my gear. Vest, arm/leg guards, Scar-H, handgun, my bag, you get the idea.

(Ok, I should deflate the 'beds' now)

With that thought, I started to deflate the double inflatable. In the laziest way possible, by sitting on it. After taking the pump's nozzle out and sticking it into the inflatable's valve. No way I'm keeping that thing pressed till it's over.

(Hmm, I know I didn't clean my gear other than my mask. But they don't look dirty at all. Did somebody else do it? Then again, I didn't fight too much for them to get dirty. Heh, Never thought I'd use the words 'didn't fight too much' in a friggin zombie apocalypse. Guess that shows how valuable Saeko is to the group in a survival aspect.)

I stretch before 'slapping' my hands on the bed I was on.

(To think, I was kissing with Saeko here some time ago. I know the only reason this whole thing with me Saeko and Saya is possible because of the outbreak, but I do wish that we were not in the middle of it right now. Though then, I'd say fat chance they would accept 'sharing'..."

Bored of waiting, I take the Scar-H and start unloading it, then take the bullets I took out and start filling them back in the magazine.

(Hmm, I got only one mag for the Scar right? I don't remember getting a second one from the dude in the armory at Saya's house. Uhh, this does limit the total rounds I can carry. At least, I know that Japan's special forces group uses Scar's. So, who knows...)

I turn to look at the bed after a few seconds.

"God, how long will this take..." I groan under my breath...

-Several minutes later-

I had my eyes closed and my head resting on my hands...

"I need to figure a better way to do this. The double one is too big..." I glance at the bed without moving my head as I speak to myself...

I was about to get up, when I heard footsteps from the door that was ahead of me, the one that led to the stairs. And seconds later, Saya appeared by the door frame.

"We are done downstairs, we folded the pool too" She says as she folds her arms and turns to her left, or my right. Towards the deeper,

darker part of the room.

"I see, I still need to deflate these" I respond.

Saya just nods while still looking away.

"Hey, umm" She speaks up as she turns to me.

"... Sorry" She whispers.

"What?" I 'ask' acting as if I didn't hear her whisper.

"I know you heard me idiot. You always hear me when you're not supposed to..." She responds with a pout as she wraps her folded arms a little tighter around her.

"Don't worry, we all need to joke around some times" I respond as I raise both arms and shrug slightly.

"It still doesn't make it right, I didn't realize that you were this troubled about our safety" She shakes her head slightly as she speaks.

After a few seconds of silence, I tap on the bed I was on, Saya tilts her head while staying in place.

"Come'er" I say as I tap on the inflatable again. Saya glances around before looking at me again.

(There's nobody else around you idiot, who do you think I'm talking to?)

She lowers her head slightly, walks up to me and flops on the bed, taking a seat to my left.

She then puts her hands on her knees, and keeps looking at them. After a few seconds, she takes a deep breath.

"Look, I..." She exhales as she speaks, and closes her eyes. Then takes another deep breath as she opens her eyes.

"I know I can sometimes come off as obnoxious and insensitive. I'm not stupid, I understand how my actions can make other people see me" She kept looking at her knees as she spoke.

"You know, Rei and Takashi. They were the only real friends I had. They were the only ones that didn't act all nice to me because I was a 'Takagi', trying to reach my parents through me or plainly wanting 'something' from me. Most people I knew didn't even look at me in the eye when they spoke to me. And before you say something retarded, it was like that before I started acting like this too..." Saya closes her eyes and 'smiles'.

"But hey, I guess the snobby rich kid persona suits me better. At least I don't have to deal with idiots that think I'm too stupid to understand their game..." She adds as she brings her knees to her chests, wrapping her arms around her legs in the process.

(To think I called her out to sit with me so I could make this thing deflate faster. Only for her to lay this on me...)

"Say something..." Saya whispers in a low tone...

"Saya, you don't have to explain yourself to me. And I got to say, compared to our first meet up, we went quite the way in terms of how you act towards me" I respond as I put my hand on her head and ruffle her hair.

"That was, back then I... sorry" She lets her head sway slightly as I keep stroking her head, making no obvious effort to stop me.

"It's fine, but if you need to hear in order to let it go. Apology accepted" I respond as I stop patting the pinkette.

"Huh, I keep calling myself a genius, yet I could not see how throwing the leader title on you was troubling you" She responds as she keeps looking at her knees.

"Hm? What makes you think..."

"Be real Naier. You managed to link a missing mask to us getting attacked by rapists. That's not called overthinking it, it's called being paranoid. And you yourself said the reason is because you don't want us to get hurt. I also suspect that 'Us', is just Me and Saeko, seeing as you yourself can get so reckless that's it becomes idiotic..." Saya cuts me off as she finally turns to look at me.

"And while you were being paranoid about our safety, I wanted to pull a 'prank'. Some genius..." She adds as she turns to look back ahead of her, resting her head on her legs.

"Saya, I hate to break it to you, but pranks or not, I will still be paranoid about that certain thing until we are really safe" I respond as I put my hand on her back.

"Because you're an idiot... but. It does make me, a little happy..." She says as she turns her head away from me, lowering her voice even more.

I bring my left arm from her back to her left shoulder, and pull her towards me. With a short yelp and some slight arm flailing, she ends up with her head on my left leg.

"W, what are you doing... Idiot" Despite her protest though, she wraps her arms around my leg. I ignore her 'protest' and start stroking her head.

"I'm not a damn cat..." Again, despite her words, she closed her eyes and stayed in place...

We silently stayed like that for some time. Until...

"Promise me, that you will survive this" She fondles her head against my leg slightly as she speaks up.

"I want to. I want to spend more time with you. Without these, 'things' waiting outside the front door. To just, be able to watch a movie

without worrying..." She tightens her hug around my leg as she speaks.

"Will we even have movies if we manage to drive the corpses back?" I ask as I tilt my head, my hand still on her head.

"It's not like the technology is lost. If we can take back the power plants and factories, repair them and redirect their power and materials or items to locations that are clear of them, of corpses..." Saya stops in the middle of her sentence.

"Uhh, fine watching a movie might be a bit complicated for now, just sitting on the roof to look at the view then, to chat together. I..." She stops again, and gets up to a sitting position.

"You said you always keep your promises. So promise me that, please" She lowers her head slightly as she finishes her sentence.

I took a deep breath, but before I could even say anything...

"Not like this, take your mask off. I want 'you' to promise me. Not the mask" She cuts me off.

I sigh slightly and take off my headgear. Then turn to look at Saya.

"I promise" I answer flatly as I keep staring at her eyes...

Saya keeps looking at me for a few seconds, before quickly leaning forward, locking her lips with mine for what must have been less than a second. She then backs off and quickly gets up.

"You better not break it. I don't want my first kiss to be for a broken promise" Saya adds with her back still turned to me, then leaves the room at a quick pace. While I was left there, looking at the door, like an idiot.

(Ok, that, just happened. What's with everybody going after my lips today? First Saeko, now Saya. Maybe I'm still asleep? Giant, friendly squids sounds more realistic than this right now.)

I tilt my head as I get up and start folding the now deflated bed, then head to the second, single one.

(Watching a movie huh. That does sound nice. Maybe I could make her play a video game, God knows I need me some co-op partners, or well, I used to. I'm kinda missing my pc here, and my steam account. Does this world even have Steam and it's meme-able steam sales? I honestly didn't check. I know it has consoles though, as I saw what I think was a PS4 look alike)

"Hmm, I also need to show Saeko how to use her gun..." I whisper to myself as I keep looking at the single inflatable.

"Up here it's a bit too dark, but with a flashlight, it should be fine." I nod to myself as I wear back my mask...

With that, I headed downstairs to find Saeko and Saya chatting with each other, the pool was folded next to the bentos on the counter. Saeko had also dressed up back in her normal attire.

"We set here?" I ask as I walk into the room, causing the girls to turn towards me.

"Yea, you finished with the second inflatable already?" Saya asks.

"No, but I did say I'd show Saeko how to use her gun. So instead of wasting time, she can come and help with the bed while I show her how to use it" I respond.

Saya folds her arms and mumbles as she glances away, obviously not looking very cheery about my 'idea'. Saeko then turns to her.

"You had your private lesson with him for your gun, I can't have mine?" She 'asks'.

"I, I didn't say anything" Saya responded with an obvious pout...

(... That's what I get for playing in two fields at the same time. I need to get this out of the way. Before it festers into something worse)

"Ok, If we are setting rules here, I also have one" I speak up before Saeko could respond, causing both girls to turn to me.

"You two, no infighting" I add up as I fold my arms.

"We're not fighting..." Saya answers with the pout still on her face.

"And let me make another thing clear" I turned to look to my right, towards the tinted glass wall that separated this room from the warehouse.

"You can take it any way you want. But if I have to pick between the two of you..." I stop talking and turn to look at the girls, who were now silently staring at me.

"Then I'm picking none." I add up...

"... You are being really unfair right now" Saya glances away as she keeps her arms folded.

"I know, but I'm not going to make a decision that favors one of you while hurting the other" I respond as I glance at Saya.

"Just wanted to make myself clear, both of you are important to me." I add as I keep looking at the girls.

(I expected something like this to happen sooner or later. But God it leaves a bad aftertaste in my mouth. As there ain't a real 'nice' way to solve it. And I can't exactly clone myself...)

Saya then sighs and drops her head, along with her shoulders.

"Uhh, even when it's not really my fault, you still manage to make me feel bad about it..." She lifts her head and looks at me as she raises both her eyebrows, leaving her mouth slightly open.

"Well, he is a sweet talker after all" Saeko butts in with a giggle.

"And a big one at that" Saya adds as she corrects her posture and folds her arms.

"If it keeps you two from pouting at each other..." I respond as I tilt my head.

"Hum, and who's fault do you think that is?" Saya answers with a frown as she leans towards me. I lower my head slightly and raise both arms.

"I got nothing to say to that, because you're right" I responded as I lowered my hands... and then, we stayed silent, sort of switching glances between each other...

"... Ok, this, is getting kind of awkward..." I scratch the back of my head as all three of us stayed in place.

"My gun training?" Saeko asks as she places her hand over the M92 on her hip.

I reflexively turn to Saya as Saeko asks that. She blinks at me a couple of times.

"What are you looking at me for, you want my approval or something?" She asks with a pout.

"Uhh, well, you know..." I respond as I tap my mask.

Saya closes her eyes and shakes her head with a groan.

"You're hopeless..." She pinches the bridge of her nose with her fingers as she speaks. And after a few seconds, she opens her eyes and looks at me.

"F, fine. I'll go deal with the inflatable" She folds her arms and leans towards me.

"But I'm expecting some sort of compensation for doing this" She adds as she narrows her eyes. Then turns around and starts walking

towards the hallway without waiting for my reply.

"O... k?" I answered after Saya had left the room...

And after a few seconds of silence.

"Umm, so. Can we?..." Saeko speaks up, glancing around without moving her head as she slowly kept moving her right hand up and down over her left forearm.

"Y, yea. Let so outside, better lighting" I respond with a nod. And start walking...

(Man, that, was weird)

After we got in the back alley I stopped and turned towards Saeko.

"To the Humvee. We can use the corpses on the visible part of the street as targets, no actual shooting for now though, too loud." I motion with my head as I start moving again. Saeko followed behind me in silence...

"Are you bothered about what happened back there?" Saeko asks as she keeps walking behind me.

"I will be lying if I said that I was not expecting it to happen sooner or later with what I'm doing. I mean, nobody really likes 'sharing' in this sort of stuff. But I'm more bothered with the fact that I can't do anything about it, rather than the fact that it happened" I respond as I keep walking.

"Do you regret your decisions?" Saeko asks again as she keeps walking behind me.

"... No. As I said, both of you are important to me" I answer as we reach the Humvee.

"Let's sit on the roof" I add as I climb up the hood, then walk up to the hood and sit down. Saeko ended up sitting next to me shortly

after seiza style. She then took the gun out of its holster.

"I'm ready for your lesson..." She says as she extends the hand that held the gun towards me.

"Master" She adds the moment I put my hand on the gun, causing my sight to lift from the gun to her face.

"I'm the master? Oh, we're doomed" I respond with a chuckle as I take the gun, Saeko giggles slightly as she closes her eyes.

"Ok, where do you want to start from?" I ask as I turn my sight back to the M92.

"Hmm, from the beginning please" She responds as she scoots closer to me. Until she was able to lean her shoulder against mine.

(A little closer and she'll be sitting 'on' me with the way she's going...)

"Alright. So let's start with the important things" I bring my finger near the gun's hammer, then under the rear sight, on the cylindrical safety switch and the small 'lever' it has on it.

"Right now the safety is on, you can figure this out from the fact that you can not see a red dot here" I keep pointing at the safety switch as I speak.

"Now this" I flick the switch to the left, causing it to rotate to about forty-five degrees. Under where the small lever used to be, was now a red dot.

"This means the gun can now fire" I say as I point at the red dot, Saeko nods slightly without turning to look at me, her focus completely on the gun.

"Now next, behind the trigger is a small button as you can see here" I flick the safety back on and point at the mag release button.

"This will make the magazine drop. And I mean that literally, it will fall out without you doing anything else if the magazine is looking towards the ground, so keep that in mind. You don't want to end up losing the magazine because you kicked it by accident while you were on the move." I press the eject button and pull the magazine out, then slam it back in.

"Kick it? That's oddly, specific..." Saeko 'asks' as she turns to me.

"I do the stupid mistakes so you don't have to" I respond as I glance at her, Saeko brings her hand to her mouth and giggles.

"What are these for?" She asks as she points at the two small 'switches' that were over the trigger.

"Right, the first one, the cylindrical one that is furthest from the trigger. Is the disassembly safety lever, or take down lever. You turn that to look 'down' if you want to take the gun apart, as it will let you remove the upper part of the gun. The second, stick looking one, is the slide catch. The slide is the upper part of the gun by" I point at the switches before running my finger along the upper part of the gun, from the front sights, to the rear ones.

"This gun is semi-automatic, that means once you fire the first shot, the next one will enter the chamber automatically, this lever makes it so once the last shot is fired, the slide will stay back. That way, once you add a new mag, you just press it and the slide goes forward, adding a new round in the chamber, rather than having to pull the slide back your self manually" I take out the magazine and pull back the slide as I explain how the slide catch works, then, after the slide itself got locked back, I press the switch, causing the slide to rush forward. Then, I put the magazine back inside and picked up the stray bullet that flew out.

"Hmm, Ok. Look at the gun's rear sight" I then lift the gun and point it towards the street ahead of us. Saeko leans next to my face as she keeps looking at the gun.

"See these two white dots on the back end of the gun?" I ask, she nods.

"That's the rear sight, the one white dot in the front is the front sight" I lower my hand and bring the gun in front of her.

"Take it, try to aim" I say as I glance at the safety, making sure it's on. Saeko nods and takes the gun, then tries to replicate what I did.

"Use both hands, and close one eye" I take her free hand and bring it to the gun's grip, Saeko nods and closes one eye as she keeps aiming the gun.

"Now, try to align the two sights to be in the same height, while making sure that when looking through the middle gap of the rear sights, you see the white dot of the front one" I move behind Saeko as I keep speaking, to get a better look at what she is looking at.

"And now try to align your eye with the rear si..." I stop in the middle of my sentence.

(That would be a bit weird to understand, hmm...)

"Naier?" Saeko, probably because I stopped mid-sentence. Turns to look at me, her cheek almost touching my mask.

"Hmm, try to keep your wrist straight. If you need to move the gun, move it by moving your whole arm from your shoulder when moving up or down. And to move left or right turn your upper body, think of it as trying to be as rigid as possible when aiming. If your joints are loose, then your aim will probably be off, worst, you might end up with the gun slamming your face if the recoil is too strong. Also, try to keep the guns rear sights aligned with the eye you are using to aim, like how you align the front and back sight." I respond as I pat her on the shoulder, She nods and turns to look back at the gun.

"Can this gun get stuck like Saya's?" She asks right after.

"Yea, all guns can jam" I responded.

"If that happens, take the magazine off, and strongly pull back the slide by yourself. Usually the slide itself will not be in the correct position when the gun jams, so you can try to manually bring the slide back and let it go forward a couple of times, this brings the stuck bullet in the chamber most of the time, then insert the magazine back in." I point at the slide as I speak.

"If it's a bullet that got stuck while leaving the gun, you do the same thing again, though that's rarer than a bullet getting stuck while loading 'into' the gun. Realistically for you though, if your gun jams, better use your sword" I add up, Saeko nods at me.

"Also remember, be careful with the magazines, they are essentially how many bullets you can have on you, if one is empty put it back in the mag holster you have on your leg, as it can be reloaded with bullets later" I point at the bottom of the gun as I keep speaking. Saeko nods again.

"You will show me how to load bullets on the magazine?" She asks as she tilts the gun sideways.

"With Saya, she doesn't know how to do that either" I respond, Saeko nods without speaking back.

"Anything else I should know?" She asks once again.

"Always holster your gun with the safety on, if you have the slightest hunch that you might forget to do that, stick with the sword. You don't want the gun blasting a bullet through your leg" Saeko nods at me as she runs her finger on the safety.

"Should I shoot?" She asks.

"Not yet. For now, try reloading the gun" I respond as I shake my head. Saeko nods and does as I ask.

"Once you feel comfortable doing that, try doing it without looking, you want your eyes on the corpses, not the gun" I say as Saeko kept inserting and ejecting the mag...

And like that, we stayed on the roof of the car, Saeko fiddling with the gun, while I stared at the alleyway that led to the road...

-Several minutes later-

(For a residential area, this place has a really small number of dead stuff walking around...)

"You're not done yet?" I hear a new voice behind me, turning to it, I see Saya. The sleeping bags and folded inflatables under her arms, along with two bags, one on each shoulder...

"Damn, you didn't have to carry everything Saya." I respond as I get up, jump down the car and walk up to her, then turn to Saeko and motion her with my head to come. She nods and jumps down the car as well.

"I went the extra mile, so I'm expecting something nice from you now" Saya replies with a slight grin as she narrows her eyes and leans forward.

(Oh you sneaky snek mk2)

I hold myself back from chuckling and take some of the sleeping bags. And after opening the back door, I dump them inside the car.

"What's left?" I ask as I turn around.

"The pool, the bentos and the stove, along with the duffle bag." Saya answers.

"I'll go get them" Saeko speaks up right after.

"Alright. Saya, once we're set with the stuff you have, we'll check the map." I nod at Saeko and turn to look at Saya as I speak.

"Oh and.." Then turn to Saeko again.

"You shoot before we leave" I add as I point my finger at Saeko. She keeps blinking at me for a few seconds...

"I will do my best not to disappoint you" She responds with a smile as she nods, then turns around to walk towards the back of the store.

After that, I took one more of the sleeping bags that Saya was carrying and headed towards the car.

"The map is in your bag?." I ask as I place a sleeping bag inside the trunk through the back door.

"Yea" Saya nods slightly as she gives me one of the actual bags.

"I see... Ok. So, what do you want?" I ask as I take the bag and place it in the middle of the two back seats.

"What do you mean?" She asks as she gives me the other bag.

"Your compensation" I replied as I left the bag she just gave me next to the other one.

"Hum, use your brain. Because I'm not telling you" Saya answers with a slight smirk as she glances at me.

"Are you sure about that? I'm not responsible if I botch your 'compensation'" I ask as I raise an eyebrow and turn to look at her.

"Hah, you wish. Botch it and you'll have to do it again" Saya snickers as she tosses me the last sleeping bag.

"Hmm, is that so?" I 'ask' as I put the last sleeping bag in the car.

"Yes, that is so" She answers as her grin widens, leaning forward towards me with her hands on her hips.

"Well, if you want a lifetime of sweaters and socks, then suit yourself" I say as I chuckle and get out. Saya responds with a frown, and brings her face closer to mine.

(Is she honestly trying to look threatening now? Because she just looks cute to be honest)

Just as I was about to speak, Saeko appeared from the corner of the alleyway to my left, carrying the rest of our equipment. After she came up to us, we placed the rest of the stuff inside of the car and then entered it ourselves.

"Sweaters and socks... idiot" Saya whispers as she enters the passenger's seat, takes her bag from the back seats and pulls the map out. I lean towards her as she starts running her finger on the map.

"Ok, what do you have for me?" I ask as I lean closer.

"Uhh. Right now we're here." She points at the right part of the central landmass, on the higher part of the map, near the top end of the central landmass.

"The mansion is here" She then pointed at the left part of the central landmass, a little higher than the center in height.

"The three routes we can take are. Seaside if we go up in the map, if I remember correctly the house with the boat was seaside too, maybe we can use it to rest if we find it on the way. It's also the safest route considering, as corpses can't swim, so we won't have to worry about one side of the road. But it's also the furthest route we can take" She says as she runs her finger along the coastline.

"The second one is going straight from here. This will lead us to the..." She stops talking and places her finger on...

"The mall" I say as I look at where her finger is pointing.

"Yea. I understand if you don't want to take that path. Plus we know the place is overrun, big chance it has a lot of corpses there" Saya adds in a low tone.

"The third one is going down from here. It's the quickest, but we never used these roads. In difference with the other two paths. We don't know if the humvee can drive on them" Saya then turns to me. Blinks a couple of times, and blushes.

"W, when did you get so close!" She leans her upper body away from me as she shoves the map to my face.

"I was sitting here from the moment you opened the map..." I respond with a muffled voice.

"W, well warn me next time you idiot!" She shouts again.

"Saya, I don't think shouting was a good idea" Saeko speaks up as she points at the windshield, several corpses had strayed from the road and were now coming our way.

"Hm, matters not, let's go. Saeko, go over the hatch, fire a couple of shots to get the feel of the gun. Once you're back inside, I'll drive off." I respond as I get back on the driver's seat.

And as Saeko went through the open hatch and aimed the handgun, I started the engine.

(Alright, three paths. So, Which one to take?)

On the road

4 days before extraction

(Man, driving inside a big city during a zombie apocalypse is fucking nuts. Half the roads are blocked off, the other half are overrun by corpse parades...)

"Naier, you must take a left turn somewhere. If you want to reach the shore today." Saya speaks up as she keeps looking at the map.

"Yea I know, it's just that all the roads leading to the shore look like friggin crap..." I groan as I glance at the map in Saya's hands...

After leaving the store, we decided to take the longest way around. In other words, going by the coastline. The reason? We still had four days left before extraction. And while this route was the longest one, it was also the 'safest' one. That's because the Humvee is able to drive on sand without any real trouble, which means we can get past any blocked off roads as long as we have a beach next to us. We also know the roads there are, or at least were traversable, as we drove there once before.

"By the way." Saya speaks up again as she presses her finger on the map.

"If you turn at the intersection after the one we're about to reach now, there should be a gas station between us and the coastline" She adds up.

"Hmm, a gas station eh? We could use the fuel." I nod as I keep looking ahead.

"But..." I stop talking as I narrow my eyes. Causing Saya to lift her head from the map and to look at me.

"A gas station is the perfect spot for an ambush. Especially now, if you consider that working cars are as rare as they can get." I say as I keep looking at the road.

"I guess, that's true..." Saya nods slightly and glances back at the map.

"What if we try to siphon fuel from the cars that have been left around? Even if they don't work, the fuel in them should still be usable." She asks after a few seconds.

"Hmm, that could work. But we need to cut the hose in two for that. We can't have water inside it if we want to use it for fuel. Don't want to pull a short one on the car, hell knows we can't repair it." Respond as I tilt my head from left to right.

"Actually, I have a lot of information concerning the Humvee in the textbook, I looked it up while we were in my house, things like checking the oil, and water. Or how to change batteries. Humvees are supposed to have a couple of extras in them, I think under my seat. Or the one behind me, the one Saeko is on." Saya glances at the bag by her feet as she answers.

"We'll still need materials that we have no chance of finding though." I answer as I keep looking at the road.

"Only if you crash the car like an idiot." She responds as she turns to me with a rather smug look.

(Ohh, you're lucky I have both hands on the wheel my dear pinkette.)

"Do you want me to cut the hose in two?" I hear Saeko ask from the back seats.

"Yea, I should have the combat knife in a side pocket in my bag, use that." I nod as I point behind my seat with my thumb, while keeping my eyes on the road ahead.

Saeko did not respond, but judging from the shuffling I started to hear behind me, I'd say she was searching my bag.

"In that case, turn now, or after the next intersection. If you want to avoid the gas station." Saya turns to look back at the map as she starts speaking.

"No, we will pass through it. Maybe we can take a fuel canister or two. The humvee is a gas guzzler, even the lightly armored version, and we have what? Five canisters?" I glanced at the fuel indicator as I spoke.

"And we are a little under half right now. If I remember correctly, a Humvee needs four canisters to fully top up." I add as I look back at the road.

"Five." Saya corrects me with a monotonous voice.

"The road after the gas station, is it 'normal'? Does it have any bridges? Narrow roads?" I ask as I drive past an intersection, swerving lightly around a crashed car.

Saya runs her finger on the map for a couple of seconds...

"Normal, I don't see any rivers interlocking with it." She says as she turns to me.

"Good, we'll head to the gas station then. Pick anything close to us, then leave. I'm not taking any risks. We still have food, gas, and ammo to go around." I glance at Saya and nod, before turning my sight towards the next intersection that was a little further off.

(I know I shouldn't jinx it, but we have yet to run into any hostile survivors ever since the mall, if we count them as hostile. I mean, one dude tried to literally rape Shizuka and we had to choke him in order to make him stop. Don't think a 'Kind sir, would you kindly stop raping my friend' would have done the trick back there.)

With that, I focused on the road. And after teaching a couple of corpses how to fly. Sorry, I meant how to jump good. We reached the next intersection.

I slowed down the Humvee before taking a turn to the left, going over the sidewalk to avoid a pile-up that had overtaken most of the road.

(I don't see smoke coming from the cars, but the place has too many corpses, plus too many blind spots under the cars. Not going to stop here.)

I kept looking at the crashed cars as we drove past them, before looking back ahead at the road.

(Hmm, the road seems to start going uphill from here.)

"If you drive straight from here, there should be a gas station to our right." Saya points at the road ahead as she lifts her head.

"Ok. So, how should we do this..." I nod as I narrow my eyes and start to think.

"We stop the car, exit, and take whatever we find? It's not that hard." Saya raises an eyebrow as she turns to me.

"Treat every moment like you are about to get jumped on Saya, especially in moments like these. No, I will check what we can take from the car, drive up to whatever it is and use the car as a one side shield. You two will get out, I'll keep guard with the gun from the hatch." I shake my head as I keep driving.

"Where should we place what we find?" Saeko asks right after as she leans between the two front seats.

"In the middle of the back seats, on the platform that leads to the trunk." I respond without turning around.

"Very well." Saeko answers as she keeps leaning between the two seats...

And like that, I drove forward...

Several minutes later, Saya pointed ahead and to our right, at a big red platform that was elevated by two pylons.

"That's the one." She says as she keeps pointing at it. I nod slightly and slow down the car...

(I can see a bunch of cars around the station, none of them seem to have crashed, they look abandoned. I also can't see anything of worth around the fuel dispensers. But, I think I can see a couple of red, small containers next to the station's front door.)

"I see a few gas canisters by the station's main building. I'll drive there, be ready." I say as I steer the humvee towards the station and start picking up speed.

Saya nods and leaves the map next to her seat, on the platform that led to the back of the car. While Saeko disappeared in the back.

"And no crazy antics." I add up as I let one hand from the wheel and grab the Scar-H that was next to me.

"Says the guy who is more reckless than all of us combined." Saya snickers as she glances at me.

"So I can say out of experience, it ain't a very smart choice to make" I respond as I stop the car next to the front door and turn to Saya, then get up and go through the hatch.

And as the two girls exited the car, I turned the hatch around until the metal lid was behind me, then looked through the dead scope.

"We have corpses inside the building." I say before glancing behind me, the gun still pointed towards the store.

"What?" Saya asks as she brings the first of the three canisters in the car.

"Corpses inside. They heard the car" I said once again.

"Should we go inside?" Saeko asks right after, bringing the second canister over.

"Entrance hallway only, aka the counter to the right and everything on it. Be quick about it" I respond. Saeko nods and moves towards the door as Saya heads to pick up the last canister.

And as Saya brought the final canister in. Saeko opens the door, glances around and heads inside, then stops next to the counter by the entrance and peers over it. After that she turns to me, points towards the counter's other side and makes a 'two' sign with her fingers.

She then turns around and draws her sword as Saya quickly enters the building with her bag. The moment Saya got near Saeko, the later turned to the pink-haired girl and said something, causing Saya to nod and start shoving everything that was on the counter into the bag, I don't think she was even looking at what she was taking.

(Come on, hurry up.)

The corpses in the rest of the building had by now taken notice of the not so ninja duo, and were now steadily stumbling towards them. I turn my aim slightly to the left, towards the oncoming corpses.

(One, three, five, seven of them coming from one direction. I should be able to...)

Yet, before I could even finish that thought, I heard a female shriek. Darting my eyes to the right, I find Saya in a rather weird pose. Sticking her butt out as she was trying to 'pull' herself back while holding her forearm with her other hand. And, there was another hand, one that was not her own, that held her by her wrist as a head slowly reared up from the opposite side of the counter.

(Fucking hell!)

I quickly aim back at Saya, then at the head that was now with its mouth wide open, the hand that I suspect belonged to it trying to tag Saya's hand closer to its gaping mouth. Saeko also quickly turned around. And that's all she managed to do, as a single shot echoed. The corpse that was holding Saya's hand violently jerked it's head to the right, disappearing under the counter it came from.

Without taking a breath, I turn my aim to the seven oncoming corpses.

The first shot was aimed at the closest one, making it topple on a stand that had a couple of bottles on it, the stand going down along with the corpse.

The second shot went right through the shin of a corpse's front foot, causing it to fall flat on the floor, the two corpses behind it tripping on it shortly after.

I was about to fire a third shoot, when I felt something tugging my pants.

"Naier we're in! Go!" Saeko shouts as her face appears in the gap between me and the hatch.

I nod, turn the safety on and climb back inside, then sit on the driver's seat and step on the gas. The Humvee, with short wheel spin, starts picking up speed. Leaving the station behind...

After making some distance, I stop the car and turn to Saya.

"Please tell me you didn't get bit?" I 'ask' as I start staring at the arm she was still holding.

"N, No, I'm fine, just a mild bruise. I just got startled, these things have a tighter grip than I expected is all..." Saya responds in a low tone as she lifts the jacket's sleeve, four red marks visible around her wrist.

"We need to get you some arm guards." I respond as I take off one of my gloves and softly take Saya's hand.

"Does it hurt?" I ask as I keep looking at her hand and lightly press on the bruised spot.

"N, no it's fine..." She replies in the same low tone as I twist her hand slightly, to get a better look at her wrist.

(I'm sure that the virus is only transmitted through saliva. But I'm still glad to see no cuts or blood.)

"Maybe you should stay in the car instead of Naier." Saeko says as she keeps looking at the two of us.

"H, hey! I just told you! I just got startled!" Saya shouts back. Lifting my head, I find her glaring at Saeko with a really, really flustered face. Saeko on the other hand, was with her arms folded and looked as casual as ever...

"Saya." I tug her hand slightly.

"What?!" She shouts as she darts her head back to me.

"Please?" I ask with a calm voice as I tilt my head slightly, tugging her hand again.

Saya blinks at me a couple of times, before she slightly turns her head away, shifting her eyes away from me.

"Nobody is good at everything. Being in the frontline isn't the only way you can help, you know that right?" I ask as I stroke her palm with my thumb.

"F, fine..." She answers a few seconds later.

"I don't mean to cut your cuddly moment in two, but we have unwanted guests closing in." Saeko then speaks up, her eyes focused on the window next to her.

I nod and let go of Saya's hand...

"W, what do you mean, c,cuddly?!" Saya blurts out as she darts her head back to Saeko...

(I think this red, is going to be Saya's new permanent face color...)

I hold myself back from chuckling as I press on the gas once again.

"By the way, what did you yoink?" I ask as I glance at Saya.

"Yoink? What are you, a five-year-old?" Saya folds her arms as she turns to me with a frown, the blush still on her face.

"Indeed, I'm a five-year-old that saved a whole estate from the living dead, got high on grass, or whatever that crap was, and most important of all..." I stop talking for a few seconds...

"I'm an overlordy ninja penguin." I add up with the most serious voice I can muster.

"Hmm. So sleeping with two girls at the same time was not a 'feat'?" Saeko asks as she leans between the two front seats once again.

"Now, I can't just call 'that' out, that would be gloating." I say as I finally chuckle.

"Huh, so everything else was not gloating?" Saya asks as she raises an eyebrow.

"Ehh..." I just shrug as I keep my hands on the wheel...

"But. Now that you mention it. I never did thank you, for saving the estate, my parents..." Saya responds with a tad more serious tone as she tightens her folded arms under her chest. Glancing away as she lowers her head.

"You're welcome..." I respond as I nod slightly.

(Truth is, that moment was important in more ways than one. It was the proof I needed, to know that this world ain't on 'rails'.)

Just as that thought passed, I felt a chill run up my spine.

(Saeko falling in love with Takashi, Asami ending with a bullet in her head, Saya probably falling for Kohta, who had to shoot the girl he fell for, aka Asami, the same day he met her. Shido being alive in elementary school pulling his usual shit. All of that, now won't happen. They can't, happen. Well, most of them can't.)

I glance around me as I shake my head. Saya was still looking away while 'hugging' herself. Saeko was looking at the street ahead.

"Wonder where they headed off to after leaving the mansion." I ask.

"I don't know, they didn't tell me. But, if I had to guess. A military installation? Or somewhere by the coastline to have easy access to the sea? They probably scouted a location before leaving. Moving so many people is not something you can do without planning ahead, especially when half of them are as brain dead as the corpses." Saya ends her sentence with a snicker, then picks up the map she left next to her.

(Though, I'm honestly, not really looking forward to meeting you dad again Saya. Especially if he finds out about me you and Saeko, dude's scary enough as it is...)

"Heh, true that. These people probably still call this a 'sickness', and would rather hug a corpse to prove their point..." I respond with a slight chuckle.

"Well, too bad for them if they do." Saeko adds right after.

"Ohh, that's brutal. You don't care that they'll get ripped to shreds?" I 'ask' as I glance behind me. Saeko, stayed silent as she looked away, before turning to look back at me...

"These 'people' would have kicked you out, had you not managed to bring Saya's father back. Forgive me if I don't feel any sympathy for them." She answers with a rather serious tone.

"They were scared. Not going to deny that I would have felt any different though. If one of you was in my place..." I nod slightly as I turn to look back at the road.

"By the way Saya. How far 'in' the landmass are we right now?" I ask as I glance at the pinkette.

"Uhh. About one fifth?" She replies as she keeps looking at the map.

"Hmm, we still got ways to go then. So, what about the stuff we just took?" I ask again.

"What about them?" Saya asks back.

"What did we take?" I raise an eyebrow as I glance at Saya.

"I'll check." Saeko responds as she takes the bag that was next to Saya before she could say anything back, causing her to turn her head towards the back of the car with a pout.

"Saya, I need you on the map in case we find a blocked off roads. Last thing we need is turning towards a dead end." I say, hoping to stop Saya from 'pouting' Saeko to death. She thankfully nods, and turns to focus back on the map...

"How many intersections have you driven past since the gas station?" She asks right after.

"Three." I respond flatly. Saya nods and points her finger on the map.

"Naier? Do you know how to fish?" I hear Saeko ask right after.

"Yea, but only as a hobby." I tilt my head slightly as I answer.

(I used to go fishing with my 'real' father and his zodiac. Never went fishing in this world though.)

"Well, I think your hobby is about to become rather beneficial for us, it seems we picked up a couple of fishing line rolls, along with a box of hooks." Saeko replies as she brings her hand to the front, a spool of monofilament fishing line rolled up on her palm.

"Ohh, nice. I still sort of remember how to tie the hooks on the line, so all we actually need is some bait. And a buttload of patience." I glanced at the fishing line Saeko had extended towards me as I spoke.

"Still, fishing equipment? How far are we till the coastline for a gas station to have fishing equipment?" I ask as I turn my sight back to the uphill road.

"Uhh..." Saya then starts counting, something, on the map.

Yet, before she could finish. The Humvee reached the top of the 'hill'. The new view I had ahead of me, pretty much answering my question.

"Never mind..." I say as I slow down the car to a crawl.

"Huh, why did you ask me if..." Saya lifts her head as she starts to whine, but stops in the middle of her sentence as she looks through the windshield. The sea, was visible from here.

"The road ahead looks clear, but it also doesn't seem to reach the coast, I see buildings 'blocking' it further down." I press on the gas again as I look at the left and right roads of the intersection.

"Hmm, these are also some snacks and sweets here, a couple of batteries, some souvenirs and... uhh..." Saeko stops speaking as I start driving down the road.

"And?" I ask as I tilt my head.

"Umm. These..." Saeko extends her arm forward again. And as I turned to look, the first thing I noticed was Saya's eyes going wide, as her face took a very deep shade of 'red'...

"AAaa! As I told you! I wasn't looking at every little thing I was shoving in the bag!" Saya shouts before I could even speak...

(A small square package, with a round bumb... yea. These are condoms alright...)

I just turn to look back at the road without speaking.

"Well, we can use them for the guns, in case it rains." I respond calmly.

"Y,yea!" Saya starts vigorously nodding multiple times as Saeko giggles and retracts her hand.

"Anything else?" I ask once again.

"Hmm, she picked a couple of different flavors too." Saeko responds, and I swear, she must have been smirking as she said that...

"J, just drop the subject already!" Saya shouts as she darts her head towards the back seats, before quickly turning to 'focus' back on the map, or well, bury her nose into it...

"A couple of pens, three packages of gum, and a few lighters." Saeko then adds with a casual tone.

(I get the feeling that Saeko likes poking Saya more than I do...)

"What about the three canisters? Full? Empty?" I ask as I slow the car down, looking at the oncoming intersection.

"Let me check." Saeko replies, and then goes quiet.

"Saya, next intersection, we need to turn either left or right, which way is better?" I ask as I glance at the map.

Saya does not reply, but starts running her finger on the map nonetheless.

"Go right, the left one has a lot of turns before we can reach the coast." She answers without taking her eyes off the map. I nod and press on the gas again.

"Naier, two are empty, the third one is almost full." Saeko then speaks up again.

"How do they smell? Gasoline?" I ask again.

"Yes." She answers without delay.

"Ok, so all three canisters will be for fuel only, we can use em if we siphon fuel out of another car. Did you cut the hose?" I nod slightly as I slow down the car, and turn to the left...

"Yes, you want me to do something with it?" Saeko asks back.

"Take one and leave it with the canisters. After it's dried up, we'll use it." I respond with a nod.

"You also might wanna turn on the intersection after this one, the road after looks wider on the map." Saya then speaks up. I nod, and keep driving straight.

(Ok, the sea is visible to my left, we can't be too far now. And it's still early in the morning, so if I have the chance, I'd like to stop by the rich folk house if it's on our way. They have normal pillows there, plus some soap, or an extra blanket. Also, we can check the jeep that was there, I have a feeling that it'll be full in the fuel department.)

The moment I reach the intersection Saya mentioned I take a left turn, and instantly hit the brakes, hard...

"Hey! Be careful! Why did you do tha..." Saya raises her head with a frown, but stops speaking the moment she looks through the front windshield...

A giant pile up, not just part of the street, the whole damn section was a no go zone...

(Pinkette's attention span deteriorating at an alarming pace, please send backup.)

"Ughh, should have figured..." Saya groans as she starts looking back at the map...

"Hmm, I don't mean to rush you, but we're about to have..."

Before I could finish my sentence, a lone corpse decided to bump its face on the car...

"Company..." I finish my sentence as I keep staring at the corpse.

"Uhh, keep going straight, check if you can turn on the next road." Saya lifts her head to me, then also starts staring at the corpse...

"When, did 'that' get here..." She asks as she tilts her head and frowns.

"Couple of seconds ago." I say as I glance at Saya, then start driving. Causing said corpse to stumble and fall to the side as the car started to move.

And so, I kept moving forward, until we reached the next intersection. This one, thankfully looked relatively clear. A couple of corpses stumbling on the road, but nothing the Humvee can't 'would you kindly' move out of the way. So, I turned to the left and started going down the road, occasionally pressing on the breaks. No need to pass the car through a wall after all...

(Four days huh. Wonder if we can pay a visit to the 'island' in between, then again, we got nothing there that requires us to visit it. Except for checking if it's really still corpse free. Say we get extracted, we could inform that this place has land free of brain munching idiots. Staying on a ship can last you 'that' long after all.

Though, I don't know how good that place would be for building, seeing that it's mostly made of sand. Maybe inside the forest? Or on the small mountain/hill it has...)

"I wonder how Takashi and the rest are doing..." Saya says nonchalantly as she keeps looking at the map.

"They got to the extraction in time, so there is a good chance they got extracted. Overall, they're in a better position than us." I respond as I keep looking at the map.

"You're worried about him?" I ask right after.

"He might be an idiot, but I don't want him to get hurt. Why, are you jealous?" Saya asks as she lifts her head from the map and turns to lean towards me with a smirk.

(Ohh, no you don't.)

"I have no reason to be jealous. If for you, I'm just a temporary replacement until you can get back to him, then being jealous ain't going to change anything." I answer as I keep looking at the street.

"H, hey. I never said that. Don't put words I never said in my mouth." Saya leans back to a normal position before folding her arms with a frown...

"Takashi wasn't the one who kept looking out for me after this whole thing started..." Saya whispers after a few seconds...

"You honestly believe that I would be here right now? If I wanted to be with him?" Saya asks right after.

"Hey, it wouldn't be the first time that I heard of a girl that started hanging out with a guy to make some other guy jealous." I respond with a slight shrug.

"You. Are a friggin idiot, you know that?" Saya shakes her head as she raises both eyebrows...

"So if one of us started hanging with Takashi. It 'would' make you jealous?" I hear Saeko ask right after...

The fact that the question came from Saeko, really bugged me the wrong way to be honest...

"You can 'hang' with Takashi all you want. Now if you started acting in a way to try and make me jealous on purpose..." I stop for a few seconds, and take a breath.

"I'd probably get up and leave. I'd rather not have the people I trust the most make me suffer on purpose." I add up as I keep looking at the road...

(I just hope Saeko's sadistic nature does not mean she gets turned on by causing emotional harm to the ones she is supposed to care for. Yea, it would really not be fun seeing her trying to make me jealous on purpose, succeeding, and then getting so turned on about it that she actually ends up fucking with Takashi because of it...

Then again, so far I have seen that she likes making people she does 'not' like suffer. As she has yet to try and beat the shit out of me for shits and giggles, or Takashi in the anime. Saya's mansion excluded, we were supposed to be training then, and we were not that close at that moment to begin with...

The worst she had done was throw side jabs at Rei in the manga. Or that she was, smirking? When Rei started shouting at Takashi in front of the Police station. But that could have been because, you know. If Rei's and Takashi's relationship deteriorated in the manga. She could then have him all for herself...)

"So, you'd rather run away than face your problems?" Saya asks.

"Cutting ties with the ones that try to hurt me on purpose 'is' facing my problems." I answer as I glance at Saya...

"I, shouldn't have asked something like that. Forgive me." Saeko leans between the two front seats and turns to look at me before lowering her head slightly.

I chuckle and shake my head.

"Don't apologize, you asked a question. You didn't do anything that calls for an apology. I hope..." I respond in a joking manner as I slow down the car and swerve over an abandoned big rig by climbing on the sidewalk.

"I would rather take my own life, than hurt you on purpose Naier." Saeko answers with a serious tone.

"Umm, yeeaa. Try to do, neither of those two actions please." I turn to glance at Saeko as I take one hand off the wheel and point at the roof with my index finger, before looking back at the street...

(God this chat just took a rather fucked up turn, got to find a new... uhh? Wait, is that?)

"I can see the beach." I say as I point forward.

"Hmm, ohh? You're right." Saya leans forward towards the windshield and pushes her glasses with her hand. Not that the beach was all that hard to see from our location. It was in plain sight, at the end of this road.

"You think we can find the house we stayed at before?" I ask as I keep looking at the road.

"If I remember correctly, it was the only building that had a cement path that led to a small dock by the sea. If we drive by the beach, it should be easier to spot." Saeko answers as she also keeps looking through the windshield.

"Alright, you might want to wear your seatbelts then, we're going off-road." I nod as I press on the gas.

"I hope you know what you're doing." Saya responds as she picks her bag from the back and hugs it.

"Please, I do shit like that all of the time. In Gta V." I answer with a chuckle.

"What?! That's a frigging video game you idiAAHHH!" And, Saya didn't even manage to finish her sentence as the car when flying over the stairs that led to the beach...

(So Gta does exist here, and Saya knows about it, interesting...)

With that stupid thought in my mind, the car flew past the stairs and landed on the sand a few seconds later. And with a slide, it came to a stop.

"See, all's good." I tilt my head as I turn to Saya, then switch the right gear to 'N' and then the left gear to 'L', before switching the right one back to 'D'.

"Why, do we let you drive..." Saya groans as she fixes her glasses.

"Actually, that's a good question, want to drive?" I ask as I keep looking at her. Saya just blinks at me like a fish without answering back.

"The beach should be relatively safe to drive, and with the gear to 'L' the car can't go very fast. Or well, it shouldn't go very fast, or we will drain our fuel in no time." I add up. Saya just turns to look at the steering wheel without answering.

"Can I try?" Saeko asks as she pops between the two front seats.

"Sure, come to the front." I nod and turn to look outside my door, no fun getting jumped on by a corpse after all.

I then exit the car and enter the back seats, while Saeko climbs to the driver seat from inside the car.

(I also need one of you to be able to drive this, In case something happens to me. Leaving the car behind is not a debatable option.)

After we switched places I leaned between the two front seats.

"Ok, this car is fully automatic, so it should be relatively easy to handle. The basics you want to know are. Always use one foot when you drive, gas and brake. One foot, the other foot does nothing, the reason being that pressing the gas and breaking at the same time is not very good for the car, and you know, good luck finding replacement parts right now." I say as I point at Saeko's feet.

"Now as for the gears. The left one with L,N,H and HL. Think of it as 'H' for driving on normal roads, L for driving off-road at lower top speeds. HL is for high speed with poor traction? N is for natural, to disengage, I think..." I say as I point at the stick.

"You think? You actually didn't even 'sound' sure about the HL gear..." Saya 'asks' as she folds her arms.

"I never drove a four by four before, It's a miracle I remember this stuff to begin with." I respond as I look at Saya.

She groans, shakes her head and opens her bag, then pulls out her notebook. She then opens it and starts flipping through the pages.

"HL for normal roads with bad traction, H for normal roads, N to disengage the gear and switch to L, L is for off-road at low top speeds. You can switch from HL to H while on move, but need to be stopped to switch from and to L. On the second gear, P is for parking, N is again for disengaging the gears to let the wheels spin freely, D uses all the gears so higher top speeds, D2 uses only the first half, more power, less speed. It's for stuff like climbing hills. R is reverse." Saya keeps reading through her notebook, before lifting her head to me, her eyebrows making a straight line as she looks at me..

"If you had all that in the textbook, why didn't you say so?" I ask as I tilt my head.

"Hum, you didn't ask." Saya replies with a huff as she turns to put the textbook back in her bag.

(... Ohh, I so want to squeeze a chundere right now...)

"O... k. So, overall, leave em as is. Just drive slow and keep your eyes on the speedometer, try to not go over twenty-five or thirty." I say as I shake my head slightly and turn to Saeko, then point at the dashboard.

Saeko nods. And with an overdramatically serious face, while gripping the steering wheel with both hands like it was trying to run off. She lightly presses the gas. The car responds, and starts to slowly move forward.

"Relax Saeko, chopping heads off with a sword is actually harder than this." I say with a chuckle as I put my hand on her shoulder.

"I can't help but feel anxious. It's my first time." She replies as she keeps her eyes glued on the road ahead...

(Your first time... Ok, it's official. Anything remotely sexual coming out of Saeko's mouth. Is giving me the wrong friggin idea...)

Strolling down the beach

-4 days before extraction-

"What are these levers for?"

"Tire pressure control."

"These three buttons over here?"

"These are break, wait and CTIS indicators, they are not buttons."

"These speedometers here?"

"Tire pressure."

"This lever?"

"Emergency break."

"But doesn't this car also have a parking break in another lever?"

"Yes, you use both when stopping the car."

(... What am I here for again?)

For the last thirty minutes or so, I haven't opened my mouth, not even once. Saeko on the other hand, is going full auto with the questions. Like an inquiring ten-year-old, with Saya being the one answering them.

(Oh well, at least they seem to be working together now, instead of poking each other.)

I casually look towards the front windshield, at the beach that extended ahead of us.

(Turns out I was right about this being a good place for the car. We already passed a couple of blocked off spots on the road, and dodging corpses in a place this wide is jokingly easy. Though Saeko 'did' run a couple of them over. But judging from her smirk when she did so, I'd say she was pretty much 'trying' to crush them under the wheels.)

I back away from the two front seats and lean against the crates in the trunk, then move my head around as I close my eyes. After a couple of satisfying cracks, I open my eyes and keep staring at the beach ahead...

(Hmm, I could get the hooks ready, as I'm doing nothing right now.)

I nod slightly and grab the fishing lines along with the hook box from the seat to my right.

(Three rolls, let's add one hook on each, no need to cut the roll in parts for now.)

With that, I take off my gloves and start the painstaking process of trying to 'thread the needle' in a moving car...

-God knows how much time later-

"Finally." I groan as I leave the third roll next to me and lift my head with a sigh. Saya turns her head to me with a questioning frown after hearing me. She then glances at the rolls...

"You always try to make things hard for yourself on purpose you idiot?" She asks as she raises an eyebrow.

"You know you could have just asked us to slow down and help..." She adds up as she points at the rolls.

"But you two were so synchronized, it was too cute to interrupt." I respond as I chuckle and tilt my head. Saya blinks a couple of times, before pouting slightly...

"Idiot." She says with a low tone before turning to look ahead.

(Jeez, still spamming the idiot button I see. Bad habits die hard I guess)

"Actually Saya, if you already know so much, why don't you try driving as well." I ask as I lean between the two front seats.

"Knowing how something works and using it, are two different things. Why do you want us to learn how to drive this badly anyway? We have you, and when you're not driving into rivers, you're actually a pretty decent driver." Saya answers as she turns to me.

"Because being the only one that's able to drive is..." I stop speaking, and glance at Saya...

"Limiting our available options." I add up after a few seconds.

"Such as?" Saya asks as she folds her arms.

"What if we need to shoot while driving? What if one of you is closer to the car than me and we need to high tail it out of whatever place we might be at? Minor things that seem insignificant now can get us killed if they happen at the wrong moment." I respond as I also fold my arms.

Saya keeps looking at me for a few seconds, before closing her eyes and giving off a heavy sigh as she lowers her head.

"Ughh, I keep forgetting that you're not just an idiot. You're a paranoid idiot." Saya groans as she shakes her head...

"It's clear proof that he cares about us. Or, would you rather prefer it if he acted indifferent if we, if you, were in possible danger?" Saeko then speaks up as she turns her head to Saya.

"I, didn't mean it like that." Saya's eyes go slightly wide as she turns to Saeko...

And after a few seconds of silence...

"... How did I end up being the bad guy here again..." Saya whines as she turns her face to look at the road ahead with a pout.

I was about to speak, when I noticed Saeko becoming focused on the road ahead, more than usual I mean. Leaning her head forward as she narrowed her eyes...

"Naier, look ahead. I think that's..." Saeko keeps staring ahead as she stops speaking...

I lean towards the windshield as I balance myself between the two front seats. In the distance ahead of us, I could see a silver Suv next to a closed gate to the left. And towards the right, towards the sea, I could also see a gray block that was elevated over the water, a small boat lying on it.

"We found it..." I respond in a low tone.

"It would seem so." Saeko adds with a slight nod...

As we kept getting closer, Saya continued to have her eyes glued to the boat...

"Something's not right. I'm pretty sure that we didn't leave that boat outside." She says as she keeps staring at said boat.

"Hmm, keep driving normally." I tap Saeko on the shoulder as I back away, before climbing up the hatch. I then use the gun's scope to look at the building...

One of the windows on the second floor was open, the room's curtains waving from the open window. Other than that, I could not see anything.

(We really need binoculars. But, I am a hundred percent sure. That window was not open. It's in the room that I was in, and I never opened that window.)

I lower myself back inside the car and wear the rifle, before leaving it to hang on my sides.

"It either has people inside now. Or it had people inside after we left." I lean between the two front seats as I keep staring towards the building.

"So, what do we do?" Saya asks as she turns to me.

"The hose should be dry by now, we'll check the Suv while using our car as a shield. After that..." I tilt my head slightly as I keep looking at the building...

"If it 'had' survivors inside, leaving without checking could be a waste, there are still things inside we can use. But they ain't worth risking conflict with other survivors. We would be invading their safe house if they are still there. More than enough reason for them to get agitated" I shake my head as I keep speaking.

"We check the Suv, and we leave." I say after a few seconds.

"Alright, we do this as we are? I am not very confident that I will be able to drive us out quickly if we find opposition." Saeko glances at me as she speaks.

"We need somebody with a gun to keep guard, so either me or you will need to siphon or drive." I respond as I turn to Saeko.

"I will siphon then." She replies without delay.

"So I keep guard?" Saya asks.

"Yea, stay on the hatch, but turn the lid to face the building, use it as a shield, while aiming through the side gaps." I nod as I turn to Saya. She nods back at me with a serious expression.

"Let's switch seats then?" Saeko asks as she stops the car and turns to me. I nod and back away, then sit on the seat behind the driver.

Saeko climbs through the gap of the two front seats before sitting behind Saya. After picking the fishing rolls from that seat obviously. Her behind might be 'top bait' material, but not on 'that' sort of bait. After that, I moved to the driver's seat and started going forward once again...

"If I see a person, what should I do?" Saya asks as she turns to look at the Mp5 that she left by the trunk.

"If they are unarmed, keep an eye on them but don't aim at them. If they are armed, quickly get back inside the car. In both cases, inform me silently if they have not seen you, shout if you see them aiming at us." I answer as I turn to Saya...

(I might be willing to pull the trigger, but Saya never had to kill an actual person. I need to take into account that she might be unwilling to shoot at a crucial moment.)

She nods at me after a few seconds, then leans towards the back to grab the sub-machine gun.

"Ok, like with the gas station, I will park the car next to the Suv's fuel pipe to use as a one side shield. Saeko, keep your head down, take it like a sniper is aiming at you from the house." I glance behind me, towards Saeko as I speak. She nods and turns to pick one empty canister along with the hose, while Saya returned to her seat.

The moment I got close to the Suv, I turn the Humvee towards the sea to my right, then stop, hit reverse, and 'bump' the Humvee's rear left side on the Suv's left back door, creating a 'V' shape with the Suv and the Humvee.

"Ok we finished yesterday. Move." I turned to glance at Saeko, only to see that she had already opened the door behind my seat and was outside by the Suv...

Saya at the same time lifted her upper body through the hatch and turned the lid as I told her. I nodded slightly and glanced at the Suv.

(Huh, the corpses are still in there, the female one at least, the back windows are tinted, but I'd say the kid is still there as well.)

I then start looking around as I lightly tap my foot.

(I can't see the house from here.)

I open my door slightly and turn to glance at Saeko, who was kneeling down with her head hunched down next to the Suv, one side of the hose in the fuel pipe, the other in the canister. I then leaned outside until I could see the whole house that was behind us...

"Naier, I think we will need a second canister as well." Saeko speaks up as she turns to me.

"Do what you must." I nod as I glance at her.

Saeko nods back and returns her focus to the canister. While I turned to look back towards the building.

(Ok, after this, we go straight down the beach. Then take a right turn after we reach the furthest end. And finally, a straight line towards our real target...)

I was about to move back inside the car. When I saw it...

A figure appearing by the window, turning to stare at us, without making any sort of reaction.

"Saya, second-floor open window." I slam the Humvee's door with my hand as I lift my gun and aim towards said figure as I exit the car...

Looking through the scope, I got a better view of the figure. It looked like a high school student. A guy, short blonde hair and a slim figure and a white shirt. He looked like one of these J-pop dudes to be honest.

(He is just, staring at us...)

"Back in the c..."

Before I could finish my sentence. The figure's eyes go wide, He then starts waving his hands like a lunatic.

"AAAHH! Wait! Don't shoot! Don't shoooot!" The figure starts shouting.

(... Huh? Is that guy for real? 'Now' he saw us?)

"Naier. What should we do?" Saeko asks as she glances at me, slightly lowering herself towards the ground.

"Keep siphoning, Saya, keep your head over the hatch, behind the lid, keep an eye on that dude, don't shoot, unless you see him pulling a gun on us." I respond as I take the safety off my gun.

"Wait! Don't go anywhere! I'm not bad! I'm coming downstairs, don't go!" The guy shouts as he disappears from the window.

(Ok, if he pops with a group, I should be able to get the jump on them if they decide to get freaky.)

I switch the gun to full auto as I keep my eyes on the gate. And less than a minute later, the door flies open, the guy coming out of it.

Seeing his full figure now, he was wearing a shirt with the words 'Thriodon' stylishly printed on it, he was wearing sports pants and his hair was about neck length, blond with brown ends, giving away the fact that he had dyed his hair, he also had a piercing from what I could see. He then puts both hands in front of him...

"We are not hostile. Don't shoot, I don't want trouble." He says as he walks towards the gate...

(Is that guys for real? What if 'we' want trouble? How did he survive this long acting like this?)

"God damn it Sho! Are you retarded?! They are armed, they might be hostile!" A new voice comes alive as a new guy comes after him, grabs him by the shoulder and pushes him back.

That one, to be honest looked a tad like Takashi, Spiky black hair, no piercings whatsoever, he was wearing blue jeans and a black shirt, the words 'Thriodon' on it as well. But most importantly, on his right hand, I could see a rather high tech crossbow.

"I don't care how excited you got because you saw a hot chick, we don't know them." He adds up.

(... Well, that explains a lot. Are there more of them?)

I turned to glance at Saya, who was looking at the two guys with one mean-ass frown.

"Are you guys hostile?" The crossbow guy asks right after.

(And here I thought that one was smart...)

"No, we are not. As long as you're not either." I respond.

"See, they're cool, relax bro." The blond one, Sho, adds right after as he shakes his shoulder off the other guy's hand.

"What do you want?" I ask as I keep my finger close to the trigger.

"We have not seen another living human ever since this started, we honestly believed it was just us from how bad things looked." Sho responds.

"It's just the two of you?" The crossbow guy asks.

(Two?...)

I glance at Saeko for a few seconds, then motion her to get up.

"No." I respond as Saeko comes into view.

"Oh, I see..." The crossbow guy responds. And starts staring at Saeko...

(... Really? One guy is drilling holes at Saya, the other is now staring at Saeko? The fuck people.)

"Ohh purple, your favorite color Kuzu." Sho speaks up in a joking manner as he nudges the other guy.

"It's Kuzuma, and shut it." The crossbow guy, aka Kuzuma, responds as he slaps Sho on the back of the head...

(Great, just, great.)

"My turn, are there more of you?" I ask with a slight sigh.

(And if yes, will they start staring at 'me' next?)

"Yes, one more, he is in the bathroom though." Sho responds.

(Me and my big fucking mouth.)

"How did you end up with a working car? We had no luck finding anything that can start since that blast in the sky." Kuzuma asks next.

"Friend of a friend, we got lucky." I answered bluntly.

"I see." Kuzuma gives back a rather lackluster response as he nods slightly.

"Hey, want to come inside? We have some food, we can trade if you want. We survivors need to stick together." Sho almost instantly butts in.

(... You know, the fact that you keep glancing at Saya while saying that, is really making me want to punch something.)

"Naier, what do you want to do." Saeko whispers as she leans her head slightly towards me, her eyes locked on the two guys.

"I barely trust my own shadow if that's what you're wondering." I whisper back.

Saeko nods slightly before leaning away from me.

"Thanks for the offer, but we'll go on." I responded.

"Which way are you going?" Sho asks before we could move.

(God this guy...)

I lift my hand and point towards my right.

"Oh. We came from that way! Maybe we can trade notes!" Sho answers back excitedly.

"Naier, that could actually be helpful, if they really came from the way we are going." Saeko whispers to me. I turn to glance at her.

"You do see that the blond guy that wants us to come over is pretty much drooling over Saya right?" I 'ask'.

"But you will stop him if he tries anything funny, right?" She 'asks' back.

(You just want to see somebody's face getting bashed in, don't you?)

"Saya, what about you?" I ask as I turn to her.

"What?" She also asks as she turns to me.

"We stay and ask for info? Or leave now?" I ask again.

"Uhh, we could use the information. But, you have to keep mister creepy over there away from me..." Saya whispers as she glances at the two guys.

I nod slightly and turn to the guys.

"Fine, let's trade notes." I say as I keep my finger by the trigger.

"Hehe, great. Let me open the g.."

"We are not coming inside, the gate stays closed." I cut Sho off.

"Aww come on, it's dangerous out there. Do we look that untrustworthy?" Sho asks as he dramatically drops his shoulders.

"What about your two? You want to stay outside too?" He then asks as she glances at the two girls.

"His decision is also ours." Saeko responds.

"Ohh, well are you sure you don't want to come inside? We have a map, it will be easier to explain. And talking here like this will make these 'things' gather." He asks again.

"Bring the map outside, we will stay by the other side of the gate, that way we can talk quietly." I respond...

"Ok..." Sho makes a sad frown as he turns to go back inside the house...

"We will drive the car up the gate, just in case." I whisper at the two girls, they both nod at me.

"Saeko, can you drive it up here. I want to keep my hands near the trigger, in case our new 'friends' try something unbecoming of them." I ask, Saeko nods once again, and then enters the car.

She then sits on the driver's seat, switches to R and starts to slowly drive towards the gate. Kuzuma stared at us for a few seconds...

"Why are you bringing the car over?" He asks.

"Don't take it personally, but if you really end up being friendly, you'd be the first people we find that are so. Just safety measures." I respond as I glance at the open window on the second floor. I could see Sho by the window now, looking around the room.

"I understand, but you do realize that all we have is a crossbow. While you have two guns." He says right after.

"I'd act the same way even if all you had was a screwdriver." I answer as we stop by the gate.

"I see. Also, I'd like to apologize for Sho." He adds as he turns to Saya, she responds with her signature frown.

"He was always like that. I think the sole reason he wanted to start a band with us, was so he could become more popular with girls." He takes the bolt off his crossbow as he speaks, but leaves it 'drawn'.

"You had a band?" Saeko, who just exited the car, asks.

"Yea, me Sho and the third guy we mentioned. Haruto." He responds as he runs his finger on the printed letters on his shirt. Just then, Sho comes out from the garage door with the map in his hand.

"Found it!" He waves the map over his head with a smile as he runs up to the gate. Once he was next to it, he turned to Saya, who was still 'behind' the hatch lid.

"You are going to stay up there? Come on, we can't speak like that." He says with a smile.

"You are talking to him, not me. So quit bugging me." Saya responds with a slight glare.

"Aww come on you don't have to be so cold, I just want to..."

"Are we here so we can trade information. Keep it at that, if Saya wants to speak with you, she will." I cut off Sho as I kept staring at him.

"If you want something good to happen to you. You always need to work for it." Sho responds as he points his index finger towards the sky and smiles at me..

(The only 'good' thing that will happen to you if you keep this up, is a butt in the face, and not a butt you're hoping for.)

"You said you came from our right." I say as I point my right arm towards my right.

"Yea, we've marked a couple of roads that are blocked off in our map if you want to head that way." Kuzuma responds, I nod slightly as I turn to Saya.

"You had the map, think you can check it out?" I ask. Saya nods and climbs into the car. Then exits it through the back door, the map and her textbook in her hands.

She then opens the map and hands it to me, before opening her textbook. I take the map while still holding the gun by the handle, with my finger near the trigger.

"I will write any information in the textbook." She adds as she glances at me.

I nod and turn to the guys, to see Sho, once again. Staring at Saya.

"The're, giant..." He says in a low tone as he keeps staring slightly below Saya's neck...

(Ok, I'm seriously going to deck him.)

"You'll meet with a butt you won't like if you keep this up 'buddy'." I hit the gun's stock on the gate as I stared at the blond-haired guy.

Saya glares at Sho for a few seconds, before casually side-stepping, ending up behind me.

"Uhh, sorry, my tongue slipped." He scratches the back of his neck as he chuckles.

(I don't want to know what 'other' things go through your head, because I'll probably shoot you.)

"Then keep your mouth shut, if you think I like having you staring at me like that, well I don't." Saya responds with a glare.

"Ok, ok, I'm sorry. I just haven't seen a girl this pretty for some time..." Sho responds with a slight bow.

"Well too bad for you Romeo, I'm already taken. So focus on what we agreed on and quit staring at me." Saya groans as she turns to look at her textbook while shaking her head.

"Oh..." Sho 'fish stares' at us for a couple of seconds, then nudges Kuzuma with his elbow.

"At least now you have better luck than me, heh." He responds while glancing at Saeko, a smile back on his face.

(Seriously? This guy is like the annoying mascot nobody wants.)

Saeko just raises an eyebrow before glancing at me.

"I think it would be better if we stopped wasting time." I say as I tap on the map...

"Right, so. What exactly you need to know?" Kazuma asks.

I look at the red mark where the mansion should be at, then at the location 'we' should be at.

"From here, to here. Do you know any roads that are blocked off?" I ask as I turn my map to them.

"Hmm..." Sho glances at my map, then looks at his.

"Our map is not that big, but. We do know a couple of roads that are clear." He says as he nods.

"Can I ask why you are going there?" Kazuma asks right after.

"Yea, but I'm telling you now. We don't have space for more people." I respond. He nods at me after a few seconds.

"Based on the information we found inside a police station, there is an extraction happening there in four or three days."

"Hey! That's not fair! First you say that you won't help us, then you say that there's an extraction on the other side of the map?!" Sho shouts the moment I finish my sentence.

"You can blame yourself for drooling over Saya too much, I don't trust you to leave you anywhere near her." I respond.

"But Sho is right, it'll be too hard for us to make it that far on foot..." Kazuma adds.

"And now you want us to let you come along with us?" I keep tapping my finger on the trigger guard as I 'ask'.

"I don't trust you, and having you in the car with us makes it easy for you to get the jump on us." I shake my head as I keep speaking.

"Oh come on man! There is no way we'll make..."

"Not a debatable option." I cut Sho off, both guys turning silent...

"And now I take it you won't tell us which roads are blocked off huh?" I 'ask'.

"You are not willing to help us, why should we help you?" Sho asks as he folds his arms and starts to glare at me.

"What we agreed on was trading information on maps. If you're going to hold your word back, then we have nothing to talk about." I

respond as I extend the map towards Saeko without looking at her, she takes it without saying anything.

"Maybe we can work something out, we're really not a threat. We just want to survive, like you do." Kuzuma says as I bring both hands to my Scar-H.

"And after that, you will want to have a say in the decision making. Then you will want a gun. And who knows, maybe your friend over there will get so agitated after getting shut down by Saya that he might resort to less 'gracious' methods of getting near her." I respond as I tilt my head.

"Hey! I would never do something like that!" Sho shouts...

Just as I was about to move, I felt Saya tug my arm. She then brought her face closer to my ear...

"There's somebody on the second floor, by the window. I think they're spying on us. They keep trying to 'hide' every time they notice me looking at them." She whispers.

(The third guy? Yea, fuck this.)

"Saya, bring me a water bottle from the car please, Saeko can you check the fishing lines?" I ask as I glance at them.

Saya nods as Saeko tilts her head questionably. Saya then pulls Saeko's arm and motions her to follow her, Saeko nodding and following behind her.

"You know, when saying that you are no threat to somebody..." I take a few steps back as I speak. Glancing at the girls as they enter the car.

"Don't have your third guy spying on the opposition, it's a real dick move." I say as I stop next to the back door, and place my hand on the handle. Kuzuma's calm face, almost instantly distorts to a snarl.

"Haruto! Sic 'em! Kill the guy first!" He shouts as he quickly puts the arrow back into the crossbow. At the same time, I open the door as I take a step back.

"Stay in the car!" I shout.

The arrow that Kuzuma placed on the crossbow goes flying, hitting flat on the door. I then swiftly go to prone position, as there was a relatively wide space between the open door and the concrete floor under it, and look through Scar's scope.

Kuzuma was pulling the crossbow back, while holding another bolt in his hand, Sho had already pulled a handgun and was aiming between me and the humvee's roof, a rather freaky smile on his face...

His target switching, was his first, and last mistake. One single pull of the trigger, and he ended with his back on the ground as a burst of bullets impacted his chest and face.

I then quickly turned my aim to Kuzuma, who had just finished pulling the crossbow string back. Another pull of the trigger, and Kuzuma dry fires the crossbow as he also falls on his back.

Before I could aim towards the window, I heard two gunshots echo from the house. Reflexively, I roll under the Humvee.

"You killed them! You fucking killed them! You motherfucker!" I heard a new voice scream as three more shots echoed.

"I'm going to fucking kill you! You and your fucking sluts!" He screams again.

"What?!" I hear Saya scream back.

"Saya stay in the car and don't do anything stupid!" I shout as I slowly crawl towards the back of the car.

"He called me a slut!" Saya shouts back as one more shot echoed.

(God, this girl has no sense of danger? He is shooting at us, and that's what bothers her?)

Upon reaching the end of the car, I look as high as can through the scope, while I switch it to semi-auto.

(Too high, I can't see him.)

With the gun still aimed, I crawled slightly forward, until I had the window in view.

(Where is he?)

I keep my gun aimed at the window as I focus for any movement in my field of vision...

And a few seconds later, Haruto appears through the window, aiming what seemed to be a revolver. His eyes quickly turned to notice me. Shame for him though, I was already aiming at him. A single shot through the head, and he disappeared under the window...

And with that, there was nothing. Just, silence...

I take a deep breath, and then exhale...

"Fucking hell..." I groan as I keep aiming towards the house.

"Are you two alright?" I ask with a loud voice.

"Yea! Are you ok?" I hear a female voice answer.

"Yes. Just don't move the car, or you'll be the ones that end up killing me. And toss me a walkie talkie next to the car." I answer back.

A few seconds later, I see a small item fall to my right, next to the car. I crawl up to it and grab it.

"Ok, I don't know if there are more inside. They did say three, but they did also just try to shoot us." I say as I press the talk button.

"What do you want us to do?" I hear a female voice ask.

"First, check that both of you are actually alright. After that, we'll search the house." I respond.

"Ok." The radio answers and goes silent.

After a few minutes of looking at the house, I crawl out of the humvee and turn to the girls. Saeko was looking towards the house with a serious expression. Saya was with her eyes closed, taking deep breaths.

Using the already open door that now had an arrow sticking out it, I enter the car, then place my hand on Saya's shoulder.

"Hey, you alright?" I ask. Saya sighs and lifts her head, then turns to me.

"Between that garbage breather calling me a slut, and the fact that we just killed three people..." She stops talking and takes a deep breath and closes her eyes again.

"I'm fine..." She says as she opens her eyes.

"I know there was no other way around this, if they didn't kill us, then they would have captured us. And that, would honestly have been even worse than getting killed." Saya responds as she keeps looking at the seat ahead of her.

"You want to stay by the car?" I ask as I gently pat her shoulder. She shakes her head and grabs the Mp5 next to her.

"No, I'm fine." She responds as she turns to me with a now determined face. I nod and turn to Saeko.

"You're ready?" I ask again, Saeko nods back in silence.

"Ok, let's go. Stay focused." I nod slightly as I exit the car.

"And most important..." I turn to look at the two girls as they also exit the car.

"No hesitation. I know it sounds cruel, but these guys didn't take long to skip into trigger pulling. If one of you feels that they might end up second thinking or freezing, then stay behind me." I glance at both girls as I keep speaking.

(Obviously I was talking to Saya, but pointing my finger at her will end up being counterproductive.)

With that, I turn to the gate and raise the Scar-H. After closing in, I pass my hand through the metal bars and unlock it. Then, with a light kick, I open it completely. Raising the gun once again, I carefully move to the two unmoving bodies.

I fist kicked away the handgun that was next to Sho, then lightly kicked his sides two times, before throwing a third, stronger kick.

(That's for staring at Saya's chest)

I then glanced at the map that was on the ground next to him.

(Not a single marking on it, no wonder they didn't tell us shit. They didn't know shit...)

Turning around, I check Kuzuma's body with the same method...

(As dead as the other guy... Hmm?)

Running my eyes over the dead body, I notice a leather knife sheath on his thigh. I kneel down and take the sheath in my hand to get a better look at it. It was empty, but obviously, that's not what interested me.

I take off my bag, open it, and pull out my own combat knife, then insert it in the sheath on Kuzuma's thigh, before passing the buttoned strap that was hanging on the sheath over the knife's handle, and then push the 'button' on the strap against the stud that

was now underneath it. Upon hearing a 'click' sound, I try to pull the now firmly placed knife, with no success.

"I'll be taking that." I whisper as I undo the straps around his thigh, then take and wrap the sheath around my own left thigh.

"How can you stay so calm..." Saya whispers behind me.

"I've been looting corpses since nineteen eighty-eight." I respond flatly as I keep looking at the dead guy. A few seconds later, I turned my head to see both girls staring at me...

"In video games?" I add as I make a one-sided wry smile behind my mask..

"Ughh. Why do I keep taking you seriously?" Saya huffs as she glances away.

"Because giving obviously stupid answers in emotionally heavy situations can lighten the load. Or get us all killed." I respond as I get up, causing Saya to look back at me, then at the two dead guys...

"I said I'm fine, you don't have to hold my hand every step of the way." Saya responds as she turns to look away again...

"I wouldn't mind if you held 'my' hand more though..." Saeko adds right after with a slight smile.

"So you can Aikido me through the air and drag my face across the beach?" I ask as I motion both girls to follow me with my head, then turn around and raise my gun again, aiming towards the open garage door.

"I would never do something like that to you..." Saeko answers as she starts walking behind me.

"Except, if you wanted me to..." She adds right after...

"Yea, no thanks. Doesn't sound very pleasant..." I respond as I walk into the garage, quickly scanning the room in a sweeping motion from corner to corner.

(No matter how much I like you my dear Saeko, last thing I'm letting you do, is pull some dominatrix shit on me.)

I turn to my left and look at the door that led to the living room, then make a fist with my hand and raise it.

"Ok, no more talking until we make sure the whole building is clear." I say without turning to look behind me, then grip the Scar-H with both hands.

(I fired about seven shots, still have enough left to 'persuade' somebody to 'stop' any hostile actions. The back is clear of corpses, but God knows I don't want to see the road in front of the building right now.)

As I reach the door to my left, I grab and slightly turn the knob, then stop...

(... I really want to go commando and kick the door in, but I should take this as if there are armed, hostile survivors inside, kicking the door in will give away the fact that we are going in.)

With that I lightly pushed the door, aiming at the next room as the door slowly opened. Once there was enough space for me to pass, I stop by the door's frame and check the room's right corner, then enter the room as I turn to my left, checking the left corner, before doing a final sweep of the visible part of the room.

(Kitchen's not visible, the counter like wall is blocking my view.)

I walk past the giant table that was in the middle and stop by the kitchen's entrance.

(Clear.)

I nod slightly and turn around, slightly lowering the gun. My eyes stopping on the giant living room table. Three big sized hiking bags on the table, seemingly packed to the brim. I raise my hand to get the attention of the girls, who were still by the doorframe. Then point at the hiking backpacks. Both of them nod, and silently move towards the table.

(Next, the room with the books.)

I turn to my left and walk up the door on the left wall, and slowly open it. As this door opened towards the right, I first swept the whole room to my left before checking the corner behind the door.

(Clear, and untouched, first-floor bathroom next.)

With the gun still aimed, I walk to the end of the room to my left, towards the door that led to the bathroom. And once again, I open the door and check the room from corner to corner. And, nothing.

(Ok, second floor.)

I nod and turn to leave the bathroom...

(The trio in the house 'acted' as if they wanted to come with us. But I don't know if they were just aiming to kill or capture us the moment we got close. If it's the later, there is a chance that they might have more people that are not here right now, I need to make sure we won't get jumped on from the outside as well.)

With that thought, I exited the room and turned to the girls, who were now unloading the backpacks on the table. I then glance at the windows around the room.

"Saeko, Saya. Close the curtains, and close the garage door we used." I speak up as I turn to look towards the stairs that went upstairs.

"Why?" Saya plainly asks.

"We don't know if they have more 'friends' that are out on a scavenging run. You don't want them to see you before you see or hear them. Also, we fired shots, a lot of them. Corpses will be all over this house. The beach might be clear, but let's not make obviously stupid decisions. We'll use dynamite to change their direction after we make sure the place is clear." I respond. Saeko nods and moves to close the curtains to the left part of the room, Saya going towards the right shortly after.

"Don't forget the garage door, I'm going to the second floor." I add up as I start climbing the stairs...

Once on the second floor, I look around me. The door straight ahead, to the second bathroom, was open. The door further in and to the left, where I stayed before, was also open. That's where the third guy should be in as well. The door opposite of that room was closed. The left door that was next to me was slightly ajar, while the right door next to me was also closed.

I start by silently going to 'my' room. Before even entering it, I noticed a rather big pool of blood on the wooden floor, next to the bed. Going inside, I meet the third, and hopefully final member of the 'crew'. The third eye in his forehead telling me that he ain't getting back up any time soon. What was weird though was...

(Redshirt with the same letters printed on it. The question is, why is he not wearing any damn pants?)

I shake my head slightly before taking the revolver that was next to him, then scan the rest of the room while staying kneeled down.

(Clear.)

As I get up, I notice a second weird thing about him. But this time, it was something he 'was' wearing. A thin, flimsy-looking chain with a rather small silver key around his neck. I tilt my head as I take the key, and with a swift pull, rip it out of the chain. I stare at the key for a couple of seconds before pocketing it, then getting up.

(I will wonder where this goes after I cleared the house.)

I nod slightly and move back to the main hallway.

(Bathroom next)

Just as I started to move towards the bathroom to my left, I heard a door behind me creak. Turning around, I see the door to the far right half-open...

(This door was slightly ajar, right?)

I lift the gun and walk up to the door...

(God, I feel like one of them fodder soldiers in zombie movies...)

Shaking my head I nudged the door open completely with the gun's muzzle, then stopped by the doorframe and checked the room's insides. Other than the bed being a freaking mess and a bunch of clothes on the floor, I saw nothing weird. Going inside I check behind the door, then under the bed, and finally in the closet...

(Can't get more paranoid than this...)

I close the closet and turn to leave the room, kicking a pair of pants as I walk out.

After that, I went straight ahead, to the first actual closed door in the hallway.

Upon turning the knob, the door opened without resistance. The room inside looked untouched. A neatly folded bed to my right, a cupboard with a mirror and several female accessories on the wall next to me on my left, and finally, a desk straight ahead of me.

After a quick sweep of the room, I found it to be what I expected to be, empty. So after exiting that room, I went to check the last door in the hallway...

(Should be fine, but better to make sure. After that, the bathroom. Then I'll go down and check our next step with Saya and Saeko.)

I place my hand on the knob, turn it, and give it a push. But the door didn't budge...

(Locked?)

I raise an eyebrow as I look at the door, then pull out the key I got from the dead body and glance at it.

(Too small to fit, no way it's the correct one.)

I tap on the gun's barrel as I take a better look at the door.

(Can't see door hinges, so it's a 'push' door. Uhh, what was that I said about kicking doors? Kick near the handle? Yea, pretty sure that's what I said.)

I grip the assault rifle as I take, and let go of the breath. Then raise my leg, and with a strong stomp. I send the door flying open. Not wasting time, I go up to the doorframe, couch down and aim inside the room...

"Uhh, the fuck?" I whisper as I keep my aim towards the bed, or more exactly, the girl that was lying on it...

(She's not moving, and I just kicked the damn door in, she's dead?...)

I silently move inside the room, check it from corner to corner, then turn my aim back to the unmoving girl on the bed.

Getting a better look at her, I could see that she had medium length, curly brown hair. The type you'd expect to see paired up with a set of giant, thin-framed, round glasses. Her clothes were, in pretty bad shape. To be exact, they were ripped to the point that I could not really make out 'what' she was wearing, also meaning, that most of her body was exposed. She also had a couple of visible red 'bite'

marks on her. And not the corpse type ones. And lastly... one of her hands was handcuffed to the bed frame, the other was under the pillow that was under her head...

(Either she was one of the group and she liked getting really freaky. Or she was 'not' one of the group and I just did the world a favor by shooting these three dudes.)

I move a bit closer to the girl, going towards the left side of the bed, as it was the side she was facing.

(Her chest is not moving...)

Looking at her face, her eyes closed. I could now see several actual bruises on it...

(I know I'm supposed to be a cold-hearted bastard. But fucking hell. I wish I didn't kill these three fucks right now. Because if they really did what I think they did to this girl. Then, I didn't make them suffer enough...)

I take a step back from the girl's body and let out a slight sigh, then take out the small key from my pocket and look at it.

(The handcuff key huh...)

I shake my head and leave the key on the counter next to the bed. Before glancing back at the girl. Only to now see her eyes half-open, staring towards me. The moment I saw her, I jumped back, hitting my back against the wall.

"AAAAGGHHH!" The supposed to be dead girl lets out a loud scream as she springs back to life, taking a wild swing with the arm she had hidden under her pillow, revealing a combat knife in her hand after going for a full swing. That thankfully missed me...

Her eyes then dart to the key I left on the counter. She quickly brings her hand down on the key with a loud slap, the knife still in her hand.

She then somehow manages to grab the key with the tip of her fingers before bringing it to the handcuff.

Sadly, the way she was holding the key proved to be a bit 'too' unorthodox, as instead of inserting it to the cuff's keyhole, it bumped it against the cuffs themselves, causing it to slip from her fingers and disappear in the gap between the wall and the bed...

"NO, NONONO!" The girl screams again as she starts tearing up, her scream being a mixture of crying and anger as she tries to catch the key in vain.

Before I could react, she turned her head back to me. And started throwing everything she could find around her towards me, Including the knife. That again missed me for a good one meter. A pillow did land straight to my face though...

After she ran out of things to toss, she crawled up to the other side of the bed...

"Naier!" And just on cue, Saeko bursts into the room, and stops flat by the door frame, Saya almost bumping behind her.

"I found a survivor?" I say as I turn to the two girls...

The girl on the bed turns to look at Saya and Saeko, her expression changing into a perplexed one...

"You, you are not one of them?" She asks as she turns to me...

(... Ok, while it seems obvious that she was held here against her will. She also definitely heard the gunshots, if she figured out that the guys are dead, she would try to act like a victim to increase her chances with us. So, one last check...

God, what is wrong with me? She is bruised, beat and chained. Yet I can't bring myself to trust her...)

"No, obviously I'm not you dofus." I respond, then turn to Saeko and Saya, who just stared back at me.

"We are new members, Sho sent me here. He said 'my' reward for becoming part of the group is here..." I respond as I keep staring at the two girls, Saya's face almost falling off as she arched an eyebrow, her mouth wide open.

"Wha!Gfrrll!" Before Saya could say anything. Saeko puts her hand over her mouth, causing Saya to dart her head towards Saeko with a glare.

"Let's go. This is not a place we should be at right now." Saeko responds as she drags Saya out of the room, closing the door behind her.

(I hope you figured what I'm actually trying to do here...)

Turning my head back to the girl, I could now see tears running down her face...

"Please, don't do this. I'm, sorry I attacked you. I, I can't take it anymore..." She said with slight sobs, trying to crawl even further away from me as she shook her head, not that she could make any distance. As the hand that was cuffed to the bed was already fully extended.

"These people, they are evil. I didn't do anything to anybody in order to deserve this..." The girl whispers as she lowers her head.

"Please..." She then lifts her head back at me, tears still running down her cheeks.

"Please..."

(I know I keep telling myself that I need to be 'absolutely' sure that she was captured. But I feel horrible just looking at her... and if she's

that good of a faker then... uhhh. No, stop. Just help the damn girl you fucking paranoid lunatic...)

"Why? I thought you hated that trio." I responded, the girl just looked back at me with a blank expression.

"I mean, If you want me to kill you so you can meet them again, then sure. Though I don't think you'll be going to the same place as them. The underworld has a special spot for, uhhh..." I stop talking and lower my head...

"Give me one second." I add as I raise my finger and turn to walk towards the door, the girl staring at me without speaking. Opening the door, I find Saya and Saeko looking at me.

"Saya, how did you call the guy in that room again?" I ask as I point ahead.

"What?" Saya asks as she tilts her head with a frown...

"Uhh, Oh, Garbage breather. Thank you." I respond as I close the door again without waiting for a reply.

"Sorry about that." I say as I walk back to the girl.

"The word I was looking for..." I kneel under the bed and pick up the key as I speak.

"Was garbage breather." I respond as I get up and toss the key on the bed next to her.

The girl looks at the key, then back at me. But does not move...

(Now 'she' is the one that does not believe me. Not that I'm surprised.)

"Uhh, give me a sec." I say as I walk up to the door again, then open it and walk outside.

"Can you believe that she did not believe me when I said that I'm not an evil guy?" I say as I walk past the girls, who just followed me with their heads. Until I entered the room with the third dead dude. I walk up to the guy and grab him by the leg.

"Now I know why you were not wearing pants. And I got to say. I wish I could wrap your nerves around a twig-like spaghetti, then make you chew them while they were still connected to your body..." I growl in a low tone as I drag the body out of the room, a trail of blood following behind me.

"Do I look like an evil overlord or something?" I 'ask' as I pass by Saya and Saeko. Who by now, were just staring at me without speaking...

After entering the room with the girl, I drag the dead body inside, and close the door again. Then bring it near the lower part of the bed and leave it there. Turning to the girl, I saw that the key was still where I left it...

"The other two are by the back exit, so please don't tell me to bring them as well. Also, a good number of shots were fired, so corpses are probably going apeshit outside. Though your screaming might have been louder than the gunshots." I say as I fold my arms.

"He, he's dead?" She asks with a meek voice...

"Dono, let's check." I respond as I go to his legs, spread them, take a step back, and deliver a strong kick. That honestly, made me hurt as well. All the time, the girl just stared, her eyes going slightly wide as the kick connected...

"Now, either he got balls of steel, or he got no balls at all. Take a guess." I respond as I 'clean' the tip of my boot on the guy's shirt.

The girl glances at me, before slowly taking the key, finally unlocking the handcuff. After massaging her wrist for a few seconds, she

closes her eyes and 'hiccups' a couple of times as she brings her hands to her face, before starting to cry again.

... And she kept crying for a few minutes... Until, she finally calmed down enough to stop. After rubbing her eyes, she turned her head to the dead body, and started staring at it with a vacant look.

"I'm going to bring you some clothes..." I say as I glance at the knife she threw at me a couple of minutes ago. Then head to it and pick it up, before turning towards the door...

"Thank you..." I hear the girl softly whisper.

"Don't. We're not out of the woods yet." I respond as I glance behind me, then head out of the room...

(I just hope you know how to survive by yourself. Because saving you from 'these' three fruits, and taking you with me, are two different things...)

Hitomi

-4 days before extraction-

(Huh, I expected more of you creeps to be clogged up here to be honest.)

I flip the dynamite I have in my hand in the air, then let it land back on my hand. All the while I was staring at the corpses behind the front gate.

(Well, matters not. Go bark up another tree.)

I light the dynamite's fuse, take a step forward, and toss the red stick. Which flies in an ark over the gate, and lands near the opposite house's yard. I nod, turn around, and start walking towards the front door. And as I entered the building, a loud explosion echoed behind me. Causing the girl we found earlier to jump on her seat as she darted her head towards me, or well, the open door. She was now wearing a pair of blue jeans and a brown long-sleeved shirt that had a wide 'V' cut on the collar. On top of that, she had a bedsheet that she had wrapped around her, sitting in the right corner of the giant table, still deathly quiet. Not that I blame her, we did manage to find one thing though, her name. Hitomi.

Saeko and Saya were also sitting by the giant living room table. Saya on the opposite side, facing me. While Saeko was sitting on 'my' side of the table and had her back turned to me.

(At least she was willing to eat something, even if it was just snack food. That trio had quite the stash in their bags, in terms of snack food and water. Other than that, we also found a pair of binoculars in there. Along with a second combat knife and a sheath, both of which I gave to Saya. Though with that school skirt, you couldn't really tell if she is wearing it or not. Now, we also found a couple of bullets that fit our handguns and Saya's Mp5, along with the revolver I picked

earlier, and the handgun. We also have two crossbows now, and a bunch of actual bolts. The other stuff in the bags were sleeping bags, can openers, duct tapes, ropes, clothes, that I would never wear, and some non-functioning electronics, like phones, cameras and, uhh. One set of night vision goggles, non-functioning sadly.)

"I'm going upstairs to get some stuff. We could use some actual pillows for the sleeping bags after all." I speak up as I turn to walk towards the second floor.

"Can you get some shampoo as well?" Saya asks as I start walking. I nod as I glance at her, then keep going up the stairs...

(Hopefully, the girls can get Hitomi to open up while there isn't a 'guy' around them..)

After climbing the stairs, I first move to the untouched right room, and head straight to the bed. Then take the two pillows from there. After that, I went to 'my' room, as it was the second least messed up room. And take the two pillows from there as well. Stuffing them all under my arm, I then went to the bathroom for a couple of shampoo bottles.

(Ok, that should do it, let's go.)

With the 'loot' now acquired, I make my way back downstairs. To find the girls still as quiet as ever. Without speaking, I headed towards the garage. Where we now had the Humvee parked at. After entering the room and reaching the car, I opened its back door, and stopped.

"Uhh, can one of you help me with this?" I ask with a loud voice.

"What is it?" Saya asks after also entering the garage, closing the door behind her.

"Can't leave the pillows on the car's floor, can you open Saeko's bag? Since she doesn't use it, we can put the pillows in there as they

ain't too fluffy." I respond as I leave the shampoos on the seat in front of me, take a step back, and turn to her.

"Yea, alright." She nods and casually enters the car, going on all fours...

(Saya, you do realize you are wearing a short skirt, right? Oh well, not complaining about the view here, signature blue with white stripes it is... or is it white with blue stripes?...)

Saya then sits in the middle of the car and turns around, extending her arm while grabbing Saeko's bag with the other.

"Give me one." She says as she glances at the pillows, then back at me. I nod and give her one of the pillows. Yet, as she tries to put it in the bag, she stops and tilts her head. She then pulls out a wooden box from the bag.

"What is this? She asks as she casually opens the top cover. Inside, a sword cleaning kit, along with a sharpening slab.

"Sword maintenance tools. Also, remind me to never give you my bag." I respond, causing Saya to turn her head to me with a questioning look.

(She's seriously wondering why I just said that?)

"You do realize you just opened Saeko's bag and started fiddling with her stuff right?" I 'ask'. Saya blinks a couple of times...

"Uhh. Right, sorry." She responds as she closes the box and proceeds to stuff the pillow in the bag. Then extends her arm to me again.

(Why are you apologizing to me?)

"Hey, umm. Are we going to take Hitomi with us?" She asks as I give her another pillow.

"I don't know. What she's been through was horrible..." I stop talking and let out a slight sigh.

"But picking every lost soul we find, can turn sour for us faster than you think." I respond as I hand her another pillow.

"So saving Alice was a fluke?" Saya asks again.

"Saving Alice was a decision made with Takashi on the wheel. There's also the difference that Alice wouldn't have survived had we not intervened. While I'm willing to spare some resources to help the girl, taking her along with us is..." I stop talking, as I give her another pillow.

"You know that the only ones I really care for, are you and Saeko." I add, causing Saya to stop and turn to look at me.

"You must have also realized by now, that the way I'm doing things, and the way Takashi did things. Are a bit 'different'. To the point that last time we were here, I nearly got kicked out." I continue speaking...

"Ughh, don't remind me..." Saya groans slightly as she turns to put the pillow in the bag.

(Well the mood is turning sour, fast. Time to throw a wrench in the works.)

"Why? Reminds you of how you fell asleep and ended up on 'my' side of the bed?" I 'ask' as I hand her the last pillow. Saya takes it, and freezes with her arm still extended towards me.

"Y, you still remember that?" She asks as her face starts to slightly blush.

"What do you mean 'still'. I'll forget my name before forgetting 'that'." I respond with a slight chuckle, and end up with the pillow she was holding to my face.

"S,shut up. You're changing the subject." Saya says with a slight pout as she 'glares' at me.

"Sorry." I respond with a chuckle as I give her the pillow back.

"I ain't a knight in shining armor like Takashi after all." I add. Saya just turns to look at the bag, turning her head away from me.

"Thank... that. Last thing... need is more competition... Saeko's enough..." Saya whispers without turning to me...

"What?" I 'ask' as I tilt my head.

"I said, Thank god for that. One Takashi is enough, I don't want to have to deal with two of them." Saya 'answers' as she turns to me with a frown.

"Oh, because I'm pretty sure I heard something about Saeko, and competition..." I respond with a slight grin. Saya 'blank stares' at me for a couple of seconds...

"You're hearing things." She responds with a rather calm demeanor as she turns to look at the bag in her hands.

(Ohh, no blushing stutter fest? Saya's evolving...)

"No matter the case, I don't intend to make this decision behind her back. We'll chat about what we'll do after she gets her bearings together, along with you and Saeko..." I say I point at the shampoos.

"Yea, that would be for the best." Saya nods as she takes the bottles and places them at a corner inside the trunk. Then exits the car and stands up next to me.

"Let's go?" I ask as I tilt my head, she nods and starts walking towards the main room.

Upon entering said room, we all sit by the table. Saeko next to me to my left, Saya sitting ahead of me on the opposite side of the table.

Hitomi to my right, two seats away.

(Ok, as much as I don't want to seem like an ass about our new guest, we have things to do...)

"Ok, I'm going to be insensitive here, but I need to ask you. Did these three have any more in their group?" I ask as I look at Hitomi. She turns her head and stares at me for a couple of seconds. Then shakes her head.

"No..." She responds in a low tone.

"Ok, so we should not expect more of them to come out of the woodworks." I nod slightly, then turn to Saeko.

"Found anything of worth other than the things we already know of?" I ask once again.

"I found these, other than that. I'm afraid nothing new" Saeko responds as she shows me two 'hands-free' flashlights.

"Ohh, nice. I needed one of these." I nod as I take one of the flashlights. It looked like a normal handheld one, but it curved forward in the end. Making it look like a mini cane. After checking that it works, I shove it in the vest's left chest pocket. The whole flashlight fitting inside, with only the 'light bulb' sticking outside.

"Ok, so..." With that done, I glance at Saeko and Saya, then turn to the girl...

"What's our next move?" I ask as I turn back to Saeko and Saya. They both look at each other for a few seconds, before turning to me. Throwing the occasional glance towards the third girl...

(Jeez, make me the bad guy here don'cha.)

I turn to look towards Hitomi, who just lifts her head to stare back at me, still as silent as ever.

(Well, here goes nothing. Let's see if we can make her 'speak' for starters)

"Uhh, you don't have to answer if you don't want to..." I stop speaking and fold my arms.

"But how the hell did you end up as you did?" I ask. Hitomi stares at me for a few seconds, then looks away.

"Boat." She 'answers'. Causing me to tilt my head with a questioning frown. Not that she could see it.

"I saw a small boat with a lot of people on it. In the sea, two days ago..." She adds a few seconds later...

(... Two days ago? I have a bad feeling about this...)

"And the boat was the one by the small cement dock near this house?" I ask, Hitomi just nods back...

(... Well, fuck me. Two days ago, 'we' were on the island. She saw us on our way back?)

"I followed the boat and..." Hitomi tightens the sheet around her as she starts speaking again.

"On the way, I found 'these' guys. They had seen the boat as well and were following it as well. We decided to go together, as we were going the same direction. But by the time we found the boat, it was abandoned. Seeing that this house was connected to where the boat was left, we decided to check it. But we found the house to be empty as well. The three then decided that it would be better if we waited for the ones with the boat to come back, as the house was secured..." Hitomi lets out a small sigh as she stops speaking...

(Wait, secured? I'm pretty damn sure we left the front fucking door wide open. If they said that to her. Then they 'knew' we were not

coming back. They planned ahead in order to isolate her in the house?)

"They, were really friendly to me in the beginning. And everything seemed to be going fine, up to the moment when it got dark. Where we decided that it was too dangerous for us to leave. One of the guys said that he will stay up in case the other group comes back, while the rest of us went to sleep... but, just as I went to sleep... they... they" Hitomi starts slowing down, lowering her head, before she stops speaking completely.

"That's enough..." I say as I nod slightly...

(These guys had this going for two full nights and one day. Fucking hell, I really didn't make them suffer enough. Even if she was way too gullible, that does not excuse them.)

"Are you going to leave?" Hitomi asks right after.

"Yes, we know of an extraction point, in the center of this landmass." I respond flatly.

After that, there was a short silence. Until Hitomi got up, and went up the stairs. And then, silence once again.

"What do you intend to do?" Saeko asks after it was just the three of us at the table.

"I don't know..." I answer with a slight groan.

"Whatever you decide. I will be fine with it..." Saeko responds with a slight smile.

(That's, actually kind of brutal...)

"You think she can survive on her own? Even if she's less trusting of strangers now. She just, looks a bit..." Saya stops talking before she could end her sentence, as we heard footsteps by the stairs..

"Excuse me..." Just then, Hitomi walked down the stairs and speaks up. Causing us to turn towards her...

"I'll pay you, to take me to that extraction with you..." She says as she extends both arms towards us. Holding what I'm pretty sure, is a Katana...

I reflexively look towards Saeko, to see that she still had her own sword by her side, then turn back to Hitomi...

"Uhh. This belonged to?" I ask as I tilt my head.

"The one that had the crossbow, I overheard him say that he hid it inside the unused bed, between the mattress and the planks..." Hitomi explains as she walks up to the table, and leaves the sheathed sword on it.

"I'm going to give it to you, if you'll take me with you..." She adds right after...

"Aren't you being a bit too naive, what if we just take the sword now and leave without you?" Saya 'asks'.

"Would it make any difference if I didn't bring it? You could just lie to me, then throw me out after you had what you wanted from me..." Hitomi responds as she keeps looking at the sword.

"Why risk trusting us? You do realize that I killed these three, before I actually found out what they did to you." I add as I fold my arms...

"What other choice do I have? I can't fight, I won't make it on foot..." Hitomi says as she lowers her head...

"If you wanted to hurt me, you could have done so while I was still tied..." She adds as she lifts her head to look at me.

(Uhh, well. I 'could' use a sword, the bokken is nice and all but...)

"Saeko, mind if you check the blade for me, I trust you more than me when it comes to swords." I say as I turn to Saeko, who nods and gets up from her seat. Then walks up to the blade, stopping next to Hitomi.

"May I?" She asks as she turns to the girl. Hitomi nods and takes a couple of steps back. Saeko then takes the blade, and draws it.

She brings the tsuba close to one of her eyes as she closes the other. Pointing the blade straight ahead of her as she looks at the slightly curved sword. Then, she looks at the blade's handle...

"This is a Shin-gunto. As it's handle is made out of aluminum and it has no actual hand wrap. The pattern on the handle is in truth embossed on the aluminum. This type of sword was used by Japan during the nineteen-thirties and later on. Including in the Second world war. The blade looks, pretty well kept. A bit, too well kept. And as the swords created during the Second world war were actually of pretty low quality due to the limited resources. They either managed to find a sword that's over eighty to ninety years old, yet still in pristine condition. Or, it was forged recently, as an imitation." Saeko turns to me as she finishes explaining.

"Can it cut anything? Or it's going to be a clunkier bokken?" I ask as I tilt my head.

"It's viable as a blade. It might, need some maintenance..." She answers as she turns to look at the blade.

"But I can take care of that. And, if you want. I could give you some lessons on how to use it effectively." She adds as she turns to look at me with a smile.

"Yea, that would be a good idea. Or it I'll probably end up with a 'serrated' upgrade, what with all the chips it will end up having. Because I have no idea how to use a long blade." I respond with a nod.

(Most of my training before the outbreak was with knives or short blades. And what actual sword training I had did not include stuff like maintenance for real swords, or what can actually damage a blade, like swinging at a rock for example.)

"So, uhh. Hitomi, just don't expect to get the best part of the cut during your stay with us." I add as I turn to Hitomi.

"Thank you." She almost instantly responds as she bows...

"As I said, don't thank me yet..." I say as I turn around.

"Ok, so. You got the map?" I ask as I look at Saya.

"One sec." She responds as she gets up and goes to our bags, which were on the couch behind her. The same couch where I found out that Saeko indeed does, drool...

Without thinking, I turn to Saeko. To see her staring at the couch as well. After a few seconds, she also turns to glance at me. And, seeing how she ended up with a slight blush as she lowered her head and focused back at the blade in her hands. I'd say she was thinking of the same thing.

(She had the guts to walk up to me half-naked, and tell me that she's, 'willing to give me everything she is'. Yet now she's blushing over the couch? Then again, maybe she's embarrassed because she drooled on me there, rather than the fact that she slept on me...)

Saya, after fiddling with her bag, took the map out of it and then sat on the table opposite of me. I just kept staring at her as she lifted her head to look at me. After blinking a couple of times, she started glancing around...

"W,what are you staring at me for..." She whines as she keeps glancing around.

"Well, I can't see the map sooo..." I respond with a slight shrug.

"Then got over here you idiot." She groans as she folds her arms, still looking away.

I laugh lightly under my breath as I get up, motioning Saeko to also sit next to Saya. And like that, we ended with Saya to my left, and Saeko next to Saya. The map being in front of the pinkette. I glance at said map for a few seconds, then scratch the back of my neck.

"Without any real information on the roads ahead. Best we can do is keep straight on the beach, until we reach the road that's a straight line to the mansion..." I stop talking, and fold my arms on the table as I lean on it.

"Fat chance that we'll be so lucky though. For the road to stay drivable from start to finish." I add as I keep looking at the map.

"Corpses won't be a real problem, we have dynamite. As long as the road is not blocked by cars, we should be able to go forward." Saya adds as she also keeps looking at the map.

"What about the river?" Saeko asks.

"Uhh, even if the tide is low for the Humvee to drive up the stream, we won't be able to drive 'out' of the river. The walls are too high." I respond as I shake my head slightly. Saeko just nods back at me.

As I turn my head back towards the map, I spot Hitomi standing by the stairs, looking at us in silence...

"Hitomi, you know you don't need to stand there like a prisoner right? Except if you want to be a bouncer or something." I arch an eyebrow as I look at the girl.

"S,sorry." She responds with a slight bow, then lifts her head, and stays in place. Slightly lowering her head as he glances around...

(... Jeez...)

"You can go anywhere you want, just stay close to the rest of the group." I add up as I keep looking at the girl.

"O,ok..." Hitomi nods meekly and trots to the table, taking a seat on the opposite side from us.

Right as I was about to turn back to the map, I felt a rather strong jab to my left side. Darting my head to the left, I find Saya pouting at me.

"Two, isn't enough for you?" She 'ask' as she narrows her eyes.

"I'm just trying to be friendly..." I respond as I jab her back.

Saya lets out a short squeak before trying to 'retaliate', by once again 'rapid-firing' at me. This time though, Saeko had not taken over half my body. So I was able to catch both her hands with relative ease. And while still holding both her hands, I pull her towards me. As she got off her seat and leaned towards me, I passed my left arm over her head, while still holding her hands. Causing her to turn around and end up on my left leg, with her back facing me. The way I was 'hugging' her right now, it honestly looked like she was wearing a straitjacket.

"H,hey!" Saya flails her legs as she starts squirming. After trying to break free for a minute or so with no avail. She pushes her back against me and scoots to a more comfortable position, then stops moving...

"What, giving up already?" I ask as I lean my head over her shoulder and turn to look at her.

"Hum. T, this was my plan from the get-go..." She says with a huff as she turns to look away from me, focusing her eyes on the map.

(Oh, really now.)

My sight then falls to Saeko. Only to find her, smirking?

(Uhh. Why is she....)

"So you were, aiming, for this?" Saeko says as she narrows her eyes. Slowly getting up with the smirk still on her face..

"Wha, what are you doing?" Saya's eyes went wide as she darted her head to Saeko, who was now slowly creeping up to Saya.

"Remember, loud noises, attract them..." Saeko whispers as she tilts her head and leans towards Saya.

"Wha,WhaaaaaaaAAAA!" Before Saya could even start her sentence, Saeko had her hands on both of Saya's sides, squeezing her.

"S,stop!, AhhAA, t,that's not! Fair!" Saya starts squirming again as she tries to speak among her batted breaths. Saeko leans her face closer to Saya's ear as she keeps on with her 'attack'.

"Neither is you hogging him for yourself." She whispers.

"F,fine! Stop! S,Stop!" Saya's eyes were starting to tear up as she kept squirming around.

"Oook, Saeko. I think she got the point..." I say as I turn to the purple-haired girl and 'block' Saya's sides with my arms. Saeko then turns to me, with an obviously flushed face.

"But maybe, you didn't~" Saeko whispers as she now leans her face closer to mine...

(Is she. Oh boy, just from this?)

"Nope, loud and clear..." I respond with a flat tone.

"Are you sure, I would not mind, checking..." Saeko responds as she narrows her eyes slightly. Her smirk turning more provocative by the second..

"Yep, definitely sure..." I respond as I let go of Saya, then pat Saeko on the head. She closes her eyes, and switches to a 'normal' smile as she lets out a small sigh.

"As, you wish." She replies and backs off, then sits back on her seat like nothing ever happened. Saya also unsteadily got up from my leg and sat back on her seat, her eyes glued to the map, and her face as red as her hair.

But, you know who else had an excessively red face right now? The girl on the opposite side of the table. Hitomi was just staring at us, wide-eyed and as still as a deer in front of headlights...

"And look what you did now, Hitomi is all freaked out." I say as I dramatically point at her with both my palms open while looking at the two girls.

"D, don't mind me..." Hitomi responds meekly as she glances away.

(O well, the sooner she figures 'it' out the better.)

"Ekhem, anyway..." I 'clear' my throat and turn back to the blushing Saya.

"As I was saying, roads. The map these guys had was empty, so, we're going blind." I add up.

"We already confirmed that." Saya responds while still looking at the map.

"Yea, so. Before we drive off with the car, let's first check the roads up ahead. Then pick the one that looks 'cleaner'. Most of em should be uphill ones. And I remember that one of them had a big rig. The road that led to the pharmacy, that then led to the mall." I say as I keep looking at the map.

"Won't driving around with the car cause more harm than good? We will waste fuel, and the sound can get corpses to flock at the beach." Saeko asks as she leans on the table while looking at me.

"We won't drive." I answer flatly.

"Walking is even more dangerous." Saya butts in.

"We won't walk." I answer again. Causing Saya to turn to me with an arched eyebrow and a slightly annoyed frown.

"We have a small boat. And, we have fishing lines. I say we eat something that ain't canned today." I add up as I lean back on my seat and fold my arms.

Saya stared at me for a couple of seconds, and as she opened her mouth, her stomach grumbled.

"I'll take that as a yes?" I 'ask' as I tilt my head.

"S, shut up..." Saya whines as she hugs her stomach and looks away...

"Hmm, I would actually like to eat some fresh fish to be honest." Saeko adds right after.

(Yea, as the ones we caught on the island ended up being a waste, what with everybody tripping out. Better we don't mention this to Hitomi though, if she figures out it was us on that boat, she might start holding us responsible for what happened to her.)

"You are forgetting something. We have no lure." Saya says as she turns to look at me.

"Hmm, we could use some of the canned..." As I was about to speak, I remembered that Saeko said that we found some gum in the gas station.

"Gum." I tilt my head as I finish my sentence.

"Canned, gum?" Saya frowns even more as she raises an eyebrow and questionably tilts her head.

"Uhh, no. Saeko, where did you put the bubblegums you said we found?" I ask as I turn to the purple-haired girl.

"It's in the crate with all our food, you want me to bring them here?" She asks. I nod at her, and she nods back before standing up and walking past us, towards the door that led to the garage.

"Bubble gum? You can fish with bubble gum?" Saya asks, even more weirded out.

"I need to see it first. If it has a sweet, strong flavor, then yea. You chew a small part, then stick it to the hook. It also tends to be rather hard to detach from the hook afterward, so that's an extra. As there is the chance you can catch multiple fish without adding new bait." I respond as I turn to Saya.

She blinks at me a couple of times, then gets up and goes to her bag, takes her textbook and a pen, then comes back to me.

"Say all that again. This time slower, and in more detail." She says as she puts the textbook on the table and flips to a blank page.

(Heh, that's, actually kind of cute.)

"Cut a small part of the gum, chew it until it becomes sticky, then wrap it around the hook's point, after that press it to make sure it gets stuck on the hook and won't come off easily." I keep looking at Saya as I speak, who's now scribbling on the page with a focused expression.

"You three knew each other before the outbreak?" Hitomi asks as she keeps looking at us. Saya stops writing, but keeps looking at her textbook.

"No, Naier saved me when the outbreak first started..." Saya responds as she lifts her head to look at Hitomi.

"I did?" I ask as I tilt my head.

"Locking me in a room with Kohta while drawing away the corpses. As idiotic as it was, if you haven't done that, I would have died

there..." Saya responds as she turns to glance at me.

(Right, that did happen. But what else could I do? You're terrible at anything that has to do with athleticism. Not that I ever focused to see how you fared when we had same class exercises, but in that weird ass ps-vita pachinko game for highschool of the dead, you were horrible at sports. Or my pulls just sucked that much...)

"I see. You're, really lucky..." Hitomi lowers her head slightly as she starts speaking.

"The first living people I found, where these three..." She adds as she keeps looking away.

"We know we are lucky. And for me at least, Naier is the only real reason for still being here." Saeko, who just exited the door that led to the garage, spoke up.

"Heh, yea. Was it not for me, she would probably be chilling at some extraction point." I respond with a slight scoff as I look at Hitomi and motion my head towards Saeko.

"Naier, you know better than anybody. That I would have given up long before that." Saeko responds flatly as she sits to my right, placing the bubble gums in front of me.

"Or, you just wanted to hear me say it out loud?" She responds with a slight smile as she leans her body towards the table, then turns her head to look at me.

"Not, going to deny that." I take the rectangular package as I tilt my head. Opening the package, I find several thinner rectangles inside. And upon opening that wrapping as well, I find a piece of pink gum covered with white powder. I then lift my mask and balaclava until they are a little over my mouth, and bite off a small piece of the gum.

"Hmm, this should do. So, let's go fishing?" I ask as I lower my headgear and look at the girls.

"Uhh, yea. Sure..." Saya responds, with a rather disheartened tone...

(She doesn't sound very excited, then again. A rich girl like her might find fishing to be a bit too 'messy')

"You can stay back if you want." I say as I turn to Saya. She shakes her head and turns to me.

"Just, umm..." She purses her lips and starts pressing the tips of her index fingers to together as she lowers her head.

"You'll have to unhook what I catch." She adds as she folds her arms under her chest and lifts her head to look at me.

"Well, we only have three fishing lines. So one of us will be a lookout on the boat. You can do that if you want." I say as I keep looking at her. Saya shakes her head again.

"No, I want to try fishing." She responds flatly.

(My, our little princess doesn't know 'what' she wants.)

"Very well. Saeko, Hitomi? Who of the two of you wants to be the lookout?" I ask as I look at the two girls. And get, nothing.

"What, everybody wants to go fishing?" I ask as I tilt my head.

"It would be a good skill to have, so I would like to try." Saeko responds.

"I, have gone fishing before. With my father..." Hitomi responds with her head slightly lowered.

"Hmm, alright. I'm on binocular duty then. While you three fish, I'll check the roads." I nod as I get up from my chair.

"Saya, Saeko." I motion my head towards the garage door as I start walking towards it. The two girls glanced at Hitomi, then get up and

follow me.

After entering the garage, I open the car's back door, and take the three fishing rolls from inside, then leave the Scar-H inside.

"Leave the big guns inside, keep the handguns." I say as I exit the car.

"And we'll need a bucket, we can probably get one from one of the bathrooms. Also, don't mention it was us on the boat just yet. We don't know how much of a handle Hitomi has on herself just yet." I add as I look at the three rolls. Saeko nods and turns to return to the previous room.

"Saya, keep the textbook with you, we'll take notes on the roads in there." I say as I turn to Saya, She nods and also turns to leave the room. Leaving me alone by the car.

(... I'm starting to get rather excited about this. It gives me the feeling of a very lame date.)

I turn to the car, close the door and lock it. Then exit the room as well and head to the table, take the binoculars, then head to the couch where we had our bags, and place the binoculars into mine. After that, I waited until the whole group was in the room. Before finally taking our stuff, and heading out the back gate...

After reaching the boat, we pushed it to the sea and entered it. Needless to say who was on rowing duty. So, we ended with me in the center, Saeko behind me on the 'front' of the boat, Saya in front of me to my left, and Hitomi to my right. The bucket in front of my legs.

"Ok, we will go a bit deeper in, then let the boat drift by the beach. I'll be on the binoculars, so if something's up. Tell me." I say as I keep rowing. Saya and Hitomi nod.

"Hitomi, you said you went fishing before right?" I hear Saeko ask behind me. Hitomi nods again in response.

"Hmm, then, Saya. Since me and you never fished before, how about a challenge?" Saeko asks again as she leans her head over my shoulder. Saya frowns slightly as she narrows her eyes, but stays otherwise quiet.

"The one who catches less. Will have to give up their 'spot' for a night." Saeko adds while still leaning over my shoulder. Saya keeps staring at Saeko for a couple of seconds, before frowning even more at her.

"Hum. Just don't come crying to me after you lose." Saya replies with a huff as she folds her arms...

Hitomi, was just glancing between the two girls with a questioning expression...

(... Lame date my ass, this is going to be a frigging battlefield.)

Gone fishing

- 4 Days before extraction-

You know how they say that fishing is a game of patience? Well, guess who's got the patience of a squirrel on coffee.

"Arrggg! Come on you stupid! BITE!" Saya shouts as she forcefully yanks the fishing line off the water. I glance at the fuming girl as she keeps trying to 'fish'.

(The world is really working against our pinkette here, isn't it. In the end, we decided not to explain 'how' to fish. And Saya, as luck would have it, or un-luck in her case. Managed to catch a single fish by accident, by yanking the hook up and stabbing it near the pelvic fins. So now she keeps trying the same method, with no success.)

I then glanced at the fish bucket, looking at the four fish that were inside.

(Hitomi managed to catch two, Saeko also caught one, and that's about it. Now, as there are four of us, we decided to catch one more fish. In order to break the tie between Saeko and Saya. Thus why 'somebody' is freaking out...)

Before turning back to my binoculars, I looked towards Saeko. who as expected, was as calm as always...

(Still, Saya freaking out like this. I didn't realize she didn't want to lose that badly...)

I smile slightly as I turn to focus back on the roads in the distance. And speaking of roads, with them all being uphill, meant I could only see 'our' side of the hill.

(In the end, we'll have to go blind. Guess we'll just pick the cleaner looking road that's closest to a straight drive toward the extraction

point.)

Just as I let out a small sigh, Saeko yanks the fishing line up. A single fish flailing on the fishing line's end.

"Looks like I wi..." Yet, before Saeko could finish her sentence, the fish 'unhooks' itself and falls back into the water. Then starts swimming around the boat erratically.

"Looks like you didn't." Saya responds with a smirk as she turns to the purple-haired girl and narrows her eyes. Saeko then got up, and drew her sword...

(Uhh...)

Then, with a quick stab, she plunges half of her blade into the water. Lifting her sword right after, the fish she caught moments ago flailing on the edge of her blade...

"Does this count as a catch?" She asks as she turns to me, the whole group looking at her like idiots...

"Uhh, haven't you been stabbing corpses with that thing? You know we can't eat that now, right?" I 'ask' as I keep staring at Saeko.

"That might be true, but the challenge was to catch the fish, was it not?" She asks back with a smile as she tilts her head.

"That's cheating, we're supposed to fish normally." Saya responds as she folds her arms and frowns.

"Then, a draw?" Saeko asks once again.

"Cheating should be punished, you must forfeit one fish." Saya says with a demanding tone.

"That should be a decision to be made from one who is not part of this challenge." Saeko responds, and turns to look at me. Saya also turning to look at me shortly after...

"Uhhh..." I lift my binoculars to my eyes and start 'looking' through them...

(I'm the price, I can't have a vote in this. Yea, way too 'high horse' to actually say...)

"I know you can hear us idiot. Don't try to wiggle yourself out of this." Saya says as she puts away the fishing line. Then leans towards me and starts poking my shoulder.

(Uhh. fine, but as I already told em, making a decision that hurts one and benefits the other is a no go. So.)

"Tis a tie then. Now both of you have to give up your spot for a day." I respond flatly as I keep looking through the binoculars.

"What..." Saya leans back and frowns even more.

"That's just stupid, make a better decision." She adds right after as she folds her arms.

"You could give your spot to each other then, you already lost it. Sooo..." I say with a slight shrug.

Saya groans and turns to look towards the beach, her arms still folded. Saeko just giggled slightly and sat down, then wiped her sword with the cuff of her shirt.

"I didn't bring anything to clean my sword. Once we are done here, may I ask that we return to the house?" She asks as she sheaths her blade.

"We are pretty close to the end of the beach, the mansion is also near the end of the landmass..." I respond and turn to look at the textbook on the page where I had marked the roads that looked clear enough from here.

"Yea, let's start heading back. We still need to cook these after all." I nod as I point at the bucket with the fish. Saeko nods back at me

with a slight smile.

"Good, because they're already starting to stink." Saya sighs as she pinches her nose and turns to look at the bucket.

"Gahh! My hands smell like fish!" She then shouts as she winches and backs away from her own hand. All the while I was trying not to choke myself from holding my own breath, hell knows I would have one angry Saya on me if I started laughing now. With that, I rowed back towards our 'house'...

And upon reaching the cement block that thinks itself a pier, we got off the boat and headed back into the house's backyard. The three dead guys from Hitomi's previous 'group' piled up to the right...

"Umm, Mister Naier..." Just as we started to head towards the garage door, Hitomi spoke up...

(Mister? God, really now?)

"Just Naier is fine" I respond as I stop and turn around. Hitomi nods slightly, then turns to glance at her three 'friends'.

"You said you wanted to check something. But..." She lowers her head and stops talking.

"Yea, Saeko, Hitomi can you please go and deal with the fish? Saya, I need you with me." I respond as I nod and turn to look at the girls, folding my arms as I speak.

"Very well, you want us to cook them too?" Saeko asks as she walks up to me and extends her arm, taking the bucket with the fish from me.

"Yea, if we're not back by the time you're done. Call us, we will be here or the front." I say as I keep looking at Saeko, who nods back at me in response before entering the house with Hitomi. I then walked

up to Saya, who was waiting a little further down with her arms folded.

"Saya, hold on to this and wait here, I'm going to get my, uhh. Sword." I say as I give her the textbook and the pen, she just tilts her head questionably.

"What are we going to do?" She asks as I turn around and start walking towards the garage.

"Science!" I blurt out with a dramatic flair as I dart one arm to the air and point towards the sky.

After going into the garage, and then back into the main room. I went to the main table and got my new sword, then glanced at Saeko and Hitomi. Who were inside the kitchen, their backs turned to me, the faucet open next to them. What seemed to be fish tails sticking out from the sink.

"After we bleed out the fish, take two of them, I will prepare the other two. I will just have to leave you alone for a short bit in the meantime to clean my sword." I heard Saeko say as she turned to Hitomi, who just nodded in silence.

(They don't seem to realize I'm here. Well, all the doors were open so I didn't really make any noise.)

I give Saeko one last glance and turn to leave the room.

"Naier, do you want any herbs with your fish?" I hear Saeko ask the moment I turn my back to her.

"Anything that ain't spicy." I respond as I let out a small chuckle and exit the room.

(So much for not getting spotted.)

And so, I headed back out, to find Saya staring at the three dead dudes.

"Alright. Are you ready?" I ask as I walk up to her. Causing her to turn to me, her arms folded.

"Are you going to tell me what I am supposed to be ready for? Or I need to guess?" She responds as she takes a rather smug expression. Her lips curving in a one-sided smirk as she arches an eyebrow.

"We are checking how the bodies outside will react to the bodies inside." I respond as I walk up to her, then grab the blond one by the leg, and start walking towards the front yard. One hand holding the dead body, the other hand holding the sword.

(I left these three here to check whether the corpses would react to the smell. And from what I see, their smell might be as good as their sight. Because the back of the house is as empty as ever.)

"The blond one, Sho or what's hi..."

"The staring pervert." Saya cuts me off as I start speaking.

"That. The bullets that hit his face were all around the left part of his face, mostly his cheek. Meaning his spine and brain should be 'intact'. " I respond as we keep walking.

"I want to check if a 'dead' person can become a corpse, and if so, if it's only bites that do so." I add as we reach the front. Where I let go of the dead body's leg and walk towards the front metal door.

"I need you to make some noise, and keep making noise after I open the door. Because I'm slamming it shut the moment one of them gets inside, meaning it will turn to me if you ain't loud enough." I turn to Saya as I stop by the door, who just stared at me with a blank expression.

"W, wait." She stammers as she takes a couple of steps back, then turns around and runs back into the house through the front door...

(Uhh... ok?)

I tilt my head, then turn to look at the sword.

"Hmm, the sheath has a single ring on it to pass through the belt, I will need to tie it with a second belt or cloth, it'll be dangling around way too much if I leave it like this." I draw the sword and leave the sheath by the cement wall next to the door that led to the road, then kick the door. The rattling sound causing a couple of the corpses from the other side of the road to turn towards me.

"Ok I'm ready." Just then, Saya runs back out. A pan in one hand, a metal ladle in her other. I glance at her and nod, then sidestep behind the metal door as I open it.

I lift my hand and motion Saya to wait. She didn't respond. Just stood there like a statue with a serious expression...

(Ok, after one gets in, and if Saya won't mess up. I'll stab it through the back of its neck, I want to see if the rest of the body will keep functioning with the spinal cord severed.)

And just on cue, a single corpse strolls through the door. I turn to Saya and make a thumbs up, she responds by starting to slam the ladle on the pan, squinting her eyes as she leaned her head away from the noise. I nod as I turn to the door, giving it a strong kick as a second corpse was about to enter, causing the door to slam on the corpse, which then stumbled backward as the door slowly started to open back up. Using my boot, I push the door again, this time making it close completely. I then quickly bolt it shut and turn to the lone corpse as I step away from said door.

The corpse was still with its back turned to me, creeping slowly towards Saya, who was still making a racket. I nod and lift the sword next to my head, using my free hand to 'balance' the blade by letting it rest on the back-side of my hand. And with a step towards the corpse, I stab forward. The blade piercing the back of the corpse's neck. With the blade still in my hand, I throw a strong stomp flat on

the corpse's back. Causing it to fall flat on the ground, and remain down, unmoving.

"Is it dead?" Saya asks as she stops hitting the ladle on the pan, leaning slightly towards the unmoving corpse.

"Dono." I respond as I kick it a couple of times.

Seeing no response, I grab its arm as I put my boot on its shoulder. Then lift its arm and push it forward, up to the point where I felt resistance as it's shoulder could not twist any further. I then lean back, and with a strong push. I yank the arm forward, dislocating its arm with a 'cracking' sound. Saya winces and turns her head away the moment she heard the sound.

"Ugghh, warn me next time you do stuff like that." She groans as she turns to me with a frown.

"Sorry." I respond as I walk over the corpse and pull it by the now dislocated arm, turning it to face the sky.

"Uh. Is it..."

"Biting the air? Yes it is." I cut off Saya as I keep looking at the corpse's face. A constant 'clicking' noise coming from its mouth as it kept biting the air...

"Well, this is proof it needs nerves to function" I add up as I back away.

"Ok, let's see." With the still bloody tip of my blade, I walk up to Sho's body, and stab it at the chest.

"First, if blood infects." I add as I pull the blade out and back off.

"Uhh, Naier, a dead body has no blood flow, even if it does infect. Infected blood needs to circulate to where the infection can actually act. If the heart is not that point, then it won't react." Saya walks up to me and points at my blade with the pan, then at the dead body.

"Hmm, makes sense. But I don't want to stab his brain, I'd rather check something else if it's this or that." I nod and grab the dead body by the leg, then drag it to the biting corpse.

I then take Sho's head and push it against the corpse's mouth...

"Oh Saya, I'm going to..." I turn to Saya, to see her already looking away...

Another cracking sound, and Sho's body now had a visible bite mark right behind his ear. I nod and pull the body away, then leave it and walk away.

"Now, we wait." I add as I go by the house's front steps and sit down. Saya silently follows to sit next to me.

"You won't sheath the sword?" She asks the moment she sits down.

"I need to clean it first." I respond.

(I want to ask Saeko about that, but I'm not going to tell her that, knowing her she will get grumpy if I say I need Saeko's help. Also, she's really not going to bring any of this up? I mean, don't think a 'normal' person would calmly do 'this'. Then again, I've done worse, and she knows about it.)

"I see. Uhh, you think it will work? I mean Sho's body getting infected." Saya asks again.

"Dono, hope not. If 'it' can actually revive dead bodies, it's going to be way harder for everybody to deal with this." I answer.

"Huumm, I thought you didn't care about the rest of the world." Saya says as she turns to me with a slight smirk.

"I don't, but I can't take Japan back from brain munching corpses by myself. And, I can't take you out on a date with corpses roaming about in the streets now can I?" I respond as I turn to Saya. Her

eyes going wide for a few seconds as her cheeks start to flush. She then turns to look away.

"No mask." She mumbles as she keeps looking away.

"What?" I ask as I tilt my head.

"You're not allowed to wear this stupid mask on our date..." She mumbles again.

"Alright. Is that enough for compensation then?" I 'ask' with a slight chuckle.

"... Only if the date turns out to be unforgettable." Saya responds as she turns to me with a blushing, yet serious face.

"Deal." I answer as I lightly laugh though my nose. Then turn to look at Sho's body...

(Awesome I got a date with Saya. All I have to do now is get rid of all the corpses, and not die. Heh, now back to a more realistic task. Sho's body should turn pretty fast, seeing how everybody turned with the flick of the wrist in the school. Longest one to turn was Hisashi, but he showed symptoms pretty fast. Without an immune system to fight back, a corpse should get taken over pretty fast. Or, not get taken over at all. If for example whatever this is 'needs' the immune system to spread, or flowing blood.)

We then sat in silence. Though Saya was constantly glancing around, twiddling her thumbs and looking overly restless, the pan and ladle on her thighs...

And soon, I noticed another thing, a smell. A smell of cooked fish.

(Oh damn. I must be really hungry, because I was never a fish eater. But right now this smells amazing.)

"Hey, wait a minute..." I hear Saya speak up. Turning to her, I find her staring intensely at me with a slight frown.

"We said no mask in safe spots." She adds as she pokes my mask a single time.

"You call a place that had a bunch of rapists inside safe?" I ask as I tilt my head.

"As you said. Had." She responds as she folds her arms and leans towards me, the frown still on her face...

I was about to open my mouth, when the door behind us opened. Saeko appearing behind it.

"The food is ready." She says as she turns her sight towards Sho's body, and the corpse that was still, biting air.

"Ok, I'll go clean up the sword and join you all then." I respond as I get up.

"Very well, let me give you a lint-free cloth to wipe the blade after you are done." Saeko says as she nods at me and turns around, heading towards the garage.

After she returned from the garage with a small napkin, she gave it to me and gave me some info on how to clean the blade. I then headed to the bathroom on the second floor. There, I used a random towel with some water to clean the blade, before wiping it with the napkin Saeko gave me.

After cleaning the blade, I glance at the mirror, seeing my reflection.

"They really don't like it huh. Me wearing a mask." I say to nobody in particular.

"Well, I like wearing it. That's reason enough for me. But well, I'm going to eat now so..." I pull off my mask and balaclava, then pass them over to my shoulder like a shoulder pad.

"Let's go." I nod slightly and head back down to the first floor.

"I'm going to get the sheath." I say as I walk towards the exit, all three girls following me with their heads, not saying a thing...

Once out, I head next to the door and pick the sheath, then put the sword back inside it. As I start to move towards the house, I glance at Sho's body. Still as dead as ever.

(If he is not up after we're done eating, I'll count it as bodies not getting infected after they die. Maybe Saya is right, without circulation this thing can't get to the brain, where I suspect the thing festers. Or, it actually needs a live host to kill and reanimate.)

Walking back to the house, I close the door behind me and head to the table, the girls already waiting for me there.

"Sorry for the hold up." I say as I walk up next to the table.

"It is alright, come, before it gets cold." Saeko responds with a smile as she pushes the plate next to her towards me.

I nod and take a seat...

(It actually has the swiss knife here instead of chopsticks. Saeko prepared this? Doubt Hitomi knows I'd rather use a fork.)

And so, after a short silence. We started eating. This time, without any 'lessons' from Saya to Saeko on how to hand-feed somebody. After a rather uneventful lunch, Saeko and Hitomi brought the dishes to the sink. We also decided to take at least one more plate with us, what with Hitomi being with us now.

I then returned back to the front to find Sho's body still as dead and unmoving as ever, the other corpse also seemed to have given up on chomping air and was just laying there.

(Hmm, is it dead or just waiting for something to poke it?)

I walk behind the 'alive' corpse and lightly kick it in the back of its head. And it instantly starts chomping air again.

(Nope, still alive. But without the spinal cord, it can't move.)

I back away and turn to the door that now had a couple of corpses sticking their arms out through the gaps.

(Saya's racket probably attracted them. Well no matter, we'll be leaving soon.)

I nod and head back into the house. Inside, Saya was sitting by the table, looking at her textbook. Saeko and Hitomi were by the kitchen.

"We have something left to do here?" I ask as I keep looking at the girls.

"We are done." Saeko replies as she turns to me.

"It must be about noon now, the sun will go down in seven to eight hours. You think we can make it to the mansion in one go? Because if we fail to do so, we'll end up at a location we know nothing about in the middle of the night." Saya lifts her head and looks at me as she speaks.

"We still have four days before they leave. Rushing will only endanger us more." She adds as she lowers her head, focusing on the textbook again.

"So we stay here and leave tomorrow? We're going to need another dynamite if so, corpses are banging by the front yard's door." I ask as I turn to glance towards the front door.

"We still have a surplus of dynamite. More than enough to spare." Saya replies as she keeps looking at a page for a few seconds, before closing the textbook and getting up with a stretch.

"I see." I nod and turn to Saeko, who after seeing that I was looking at her, glances at the couch...

"I do not mind staying here for today." She adds as she looks back towards me.

"Hitomi, you can lock your room and keep the key." I say as I glance at the new girl.

"I, understand." She responds with a meek nod.

"Can I just, please not have the room I was locked in..." She keeps speaking with her head still lowered.

"You can take the unused one. I'm taking the one I..." I stop talking and glance away.

(Can't say I've slept here before.)

"I'm taking the one where I killed the third one" I 'correct' myself.

"Very well, I'm taking that one as well then." Saeko responds as she tilts her head with a slight smile. Causing Saya to dart her head towards the purple-haired girl.

"H,hey! Today is supposed to be 'my' day!" She shouts as she turns her hands into fists and flings them next to her hips. Slightly stomping her foot to the ground.

"Yes, but we both lost our spot after we tied, didn't we?" Saeko 'asks' with a calm expression as she turns to the fuming pinkette.

"Or you don't want to trade after all? We will both lose like that though." She 'asks' again as she tilts her head...

"Ughh. Fine..." Saya groans as she turns to look away, folding her arms in obvious annoyance.

"Ok, one more dynamite then." I add as I turn towards the garage.

After going to the car, I unlock it and grab a stick of dynamite, along with the new crossbow and two of its bolts. Then head out to the front yard, cock the crossbow, put the bolt on it, aim at Sho's head, and fire. The bolt getting lodged into his skull with a relatively loud thud.

"Uhh, let's see" I kneel down and place my knee over the body's neck, then grab the part of the bolt that was still protruding, and pull...

The bolt, while moving about, did not come off. I tilt my head and start twisting the bolt slightly, pulling it at the same time, until finally. It came off, with a sound I'd rather not describe..

"Alright..." I get up and cock the crossbow again. Placing the same bolt on the crossbow, I aim at the 'bitting' head, and pull the trigger again. Another loud thud, and the head stops moving for good. Placing my knee on its neck as well, I grab the bolt and pull it...

This time, other than that the bolt was deeper in the skull, it came off rather fast, actually breaking off part of the skull.

"Well, that proves that corpses have weaker bones." I clean the bolt on Sho's shirt, then leave it, along with the crossbow on the ground.

"Now." I take dynamite from my pocket, light it up, and toss it over the door. While waiting for it to blow up, I grab both dead bodies by the leg, one with each hand.

And the moment the explosion went off, I headed to the door. Once the corpses had turned around and walked away. I silently opened the door and dragged the bodies outside, then left them and got back inside the house, giving one last glance at the corpses around the street.

(These explosions are bringing way to many of them here. Thankfully we can leave from the back gate, and they are not on 'our' side of the road.)

Closing the door behind me, I head back into the house. And after cleaning the bolt in the first-floor bathroom and leaving it in the car along with the crossbow. I returned to the main room, where the other three girls were at, all sitting by the giant table.

"Well, now what?" I ask as I also sit by the table.

"Hmm. Good question..." Saeko responds as she tilts her head slightly, looking at the table in thought.

"Umm, the three guys, they found a couple of board games while we were waiting..." Hitomi speaks up as she glances at us.

"Board games? Well, that doesn't sound bad actually." I say as I fold my arms and arch an eyebrow.

"I'll bring them." Hitomi answers back as she nods. Getting up from her chair and heading up to the second floor...

"Board games hmmm?" Saya turns her hand into a fist and places her knuckle on her mouth, looking at Saeko with a slight smirk.

Saeko on the other hand just smiled back at Saya as she closed her eyes and tilted her head.

"Is something on your mind?" Saeko asks.

"Hmm, nothing. It's not like I think it's unfair that you get to sleep with Naier on a normal bed, while I get the sleeping bags." Saya responds plainly.

"Oh?" Saeko just raises an eyebrow as she looks at Saya.

"I don't like ties, so let's have a rematch." Saya adds as she folds her arms.

"Humm, but if what you say is true, I have a better bargaining position than you right now. Why should I accept?" Saeko responds with a smirk. Causing Saya to frown and narrow her eyes.

"I'll give you the win even if we end up with a tie." Saya responds as her face turns serious. Saeko thinks for a bit, then nods.

"Very well." She says with an inconspicuous smile.

(Oh boy...)

And so, we waited. Though we did first switch spots, and by switch, I mean the girls coming to sit next to me.

"What do you think they might have?" Saeko asks as she turns to me.

"No idea, I didn't expect the rich folk here to even have board games to be honest." I respond with a slight shrug.

(I want to say that rich people are usually no fun. But we have Saya here, and she was/is definitely rich.)

"Sorry for being slow" Just then, Hitomi comes down the stairs, on her hands, board games, up to the point that they almost covered her eyes.

I motion the girls to get up, before heading to the girl and taking some of the boxes.

"Thank you" She responds as she looks at me. I nod and turn to leave the box on the table. And soon after, all the board game boxes were laying on said table...

"Soooo. What do we play?" I ask as I tilt my head...

(None of these are familiar to m... ohh?)

My sight stops on two board games that I did know. Pandemic, and Dead of winter?

(A game about a zombie outbreak, or a game about a viral outbreak. In the middle of the zombie apocalypse. I wouldn't go and do something like that, right? Right? Oh who am I kidding, of course I would.)

"These two" I say as I point at the two games...

"Really now?" Saya 'asks' as she turns to me, her eyebrows making a straight line as she stares at me..

"Yep." I respond flatly.

"I'm fine with whatever." Saeko responds.

"Umm, me too..." Hitomi adds up, causing Saya to groan...

"Fine, but pandemic is cooperative only..." The annoyed pinkette adds, then glances at Saeko.

"The other one ain't, if you are willing to backstab people." I say with a slight shrug as I take the manual for the Dead of winter lookalike...

(I'm kind of shooting myself in the foot by playing this game though, I know I won't be able to backstab anybody. There is a difference between antagonizing somebody to protect yourself or somebody you care for. And making them trust you just so you can stab them in the back later...

Still, this one seems to have a couple of differences compared to the game I know. But other than that, it looks the same. One main mission for all. And one personal mission for each player)

"Fine, what do we start with?" Saya asks as she sighs slightly.

"Let's start with this one." Saeko responds as she points at the Dead of winter, aka the one with the backstabbers.

(... Should I be scared?...)

And so, we sat around the table, set the cards, picked a random character as instructed along with our 'secret task', and set the overall 'world' layout...

"Based On what our main objective is. We need to survive for ten days." Saya says as she looks at our main quest...

"Ok, here we go..." I nod and take the first dice roll...

-5 minutes later-

"I locked all the doors, but didn't have enough planks to barricade the left windows." Saya places down a card and turns to look at me.

"I got no planks either, let's just keep one to guard the window." I respond, Saya nods and leaves one of her two characters by the window.

-15 minutes later-

"I got the handgun, I can deal with two of them. Then, we can enter the house." I say as I point at the house marked as 'target'.

"But the sound, you will be trapped there. I will come with you." Saeko says as she places her character next to mine.

"As you wish." I respond.

-25 minutes later-

"The horde will change direction if we activate the south alarm." Hitomi points at the south part of the 'safehouse' as she speaks.

"Don't be stupid, that will bring everything here." Saya replies.

"But you have better defenses than this house, if they come here, both me and Naier will die." Saeko responds.

"Fine. But only for two rounds..." Saya groans.

-30 minutes later-

"You need to leave the building, it will get overrun on the next round." I point at the house that me and Saeko were in.

"If I leave, you will die." Saeko flatly responds.

"There is a fifty percent chance I can survive a round, that's all I need to set the radio. If you stay, you die." I shake my head and turn to her.

"You bail now. That is not a request." I add as I point at her character.

"Saya can you not keep the alarm on for one more round?" Saeko asks as she turns to Saya, who shakes her head.

"One more round and the safehouse will get overrun. No can do." She replies flatly.

"I am not leaving then." Saeko shakes her head and keeps her character in place.

"Yes you are." I instantly respond as I place a card down and move her character away...

-50 minutes later-

"Naier, open the lock. You will get killed if you don't exit the room." Saeko raises her voice as she moves her character next to the room I was in, a card with a locked door icon on it..

"Yea, but with the radio active and one person in the room. We cut the rounds we need to win by three, in other words, we win next round." I respond as I keep the lock card in its place.

" 'We', won't win next round. You will be dead." Saeko speaks back as she tries to open the lock with a dice roll, that she failed spectacularly, seeing as her character sucked at lockpicking...

-55 Minutes later-

"And it's over" I say as the round ends. The room that my character was in, overrun by a shit ton of zombies. To put it in perspective, I needed to make thirteen perfect rolls to survive, I failed at the second one.

"Only one death, not too bad to be honest." I add as I lean back on my chair.

"We still need to check our personal goals, to see who scored the most." Saya places her card on the board.

"I had to have at least three-fourths of all the players alive, seeing as only Naier lost his main character. My goal is complete." Saya continues as she turns to Saeko.

"I had to make sure one character of my choosing survives." She says as she places her card on the board. The character she picked, was mine. In other words.

"You failed." Saya says as she glances at her card, a slight smirk on her face.

"Umm, I had to survive to the end with a surplus of food." Hitomi speaks up next as she places her card down.

"So, that's why you hoarded all the bean soup. Heh, looks like your task is also done" Saya glances at Hitomi's card as she speaks. She then turns to me.

"What about you?" Saya asks as she looks at my card that was still flipped over.

"Uhh, I had to be the only survivor." I say as I turn the card and push it toward the center. Saya's face instantly turning into a disapproving frown.

"What? The way you played was the complete opposite. Did you even look at your card before now?" She asks as she raises an eyebrow and keeps looking at the card.

"I played the way I liked, I didn't want to kill any of you." I responded with a slight shrug.

"So killing yourself, was part of playing how you liked?" Saeko asks with a rather serious expression.

"Uhh, no. But it was this, or all of you dying. The horde would have turned to the safehouse before three rounds had passed." I answered as I turned to Saeko. She stayed quiet for a few seconds, looking at the card with my personal quest.

"I am going to take a short break." She says right after, getting up from the table and leaving towards the front yard...

(...'This' I did not expect...)

"Uhh give me a second" I also get up from my chair as I look at Saya and Hitomi, both of them just glance at me and nod. I then head towards the front door that Saeko had just used to exit the room.

Upon opening the front door, I find Saeko with her back turned to me, her arms folded and looking towards the front yard door.

"Did it really bother you this much?" I ask as I walk up next to her, closing the door behind me.

Saeko lowers her head slightly, but does not turn to look at me.

"I am sorry. It is just that..." She raises her head as she keeps looking towards the front door.

"All this felt a bit, too real. Considering our circumstances." She adds.

"Uhh, you have a point there..." I glance at the gate before turning back to Saeko.

"Sorry, I didn't intend to make you feel distraught." I say as I place my hand on her shoulder. Saeko shakes her head and smiles slightly.

"No, don't apologize. I just got a bit too engrossed in the game. It is silly of me to act like this because of it" She says as she turns to me, her arms still folded and her head still lowered.

(Yet you're doing a great job at making me feel even more guilty about it.)

I slide my hand from her shoulder to her back, and pull her to me. Then wrap my other hand around her.

"I got no intention of leaving you." I whisper as I keep hugging her.

I felt her arms moving as she 'unfolded' them from under her chest, then slowly wrapping them around my sides and to my back. She then lifts her head And without speaking, presses her lips against mine. She then pulls her head back after a couple of seconds, her cheeks having a deep blush on them.

"Why do I get the feeling that this was what you were after for from the get-go?" I 'ask' as I arch an eyebrow and tilt my head with a slight smirk. Saeko smiles and closes her eyes.

"I really, was not. But, it is not an outcome that I want to complain about." She responds as she opens her eyes and tightens her arms around me.

"And well, there's this other thing..." I say as I glance away. Causing Saeko to inquiringly look at me.

"How can I gloat that the girl in my arms was voted as the sexiest in my school if I'm dead?" I add with a slight chuckle as I turn to her. Causing Saeko to blink at me a couple of times before closing her eyes with a slight giggle.

"You really don't don't come off as a person who would gloat." She responds as she opens her eyes with a smile.

"Uhh, yea. You're not really wrong about that. But saying that I don't gloat. It's like gloating that I don't gloat." I glance away again as I turn my head with a one-sided smile. Saeko just laughed though her nose in response.

"Let's go inside?" I ask. Saeko nods slightly and lets go of me as she takes a step back.

"I guess I can leave Saya to have the win for today..." She says as she glances away.

"Although, I was really looking forward to tonight after switching spots with her." She adds as she keeps looking away with a slight smile.

"Now you are just trying to guilt-trip me." I respond as I fold my arms. Saeko laughed lightly before turning to me.

"Let us go back inside. I know of somebody that would get very pouty if I keep you for myself for too long" Saeko responds as she turns towards the door and walks up to it, turning to me as she places her hand on the knob.

"And, thank you. I, really needed that." She adds as she opens the door, walking inside the room...

I turn to look towards the corpses outside on the road before going inside the room as well. After that, we decided to switch to the other board game, the 'pandemic' lookalike.

Thankfully, as this one was fully cooperative, we had no 'events' during playing. And, we ended up playing, for a rather long time. Up to the point that the sky was starting to lose its color...

-Several world-ending failures later-

"Yaaawwn..." Saya puts her hands over her mouth as she stretches, then rubs her eyes while lifting her glasses with one hand.

"Tired?" I ask.

"We have been playing for what must have been hours by now. I do feel a bit sluggish." Saya responds with a slight nod as she opens her eyes and turns to me.

"Should we call it a day? The sooner we go to sleep, the sooner we'll leave tomorrow." I ask as I look at the girls.

"Yes, the sooner we reach that extraction, the better." Saeko responds.

"Well, let's pack up then. I'm going to check the car and the gates." I nod as I get up, the girls nodding back in response.

"I am going to boil some water." Saya says as she also gets up.

"Boil water?" Hitomi asks as I leave the room.

First, I checked the car, making sure that all the doors were locked. After that I checked the back gate, then the back garage door. After that I checked the front gate and yard door, then the house's front door and front garage door.

(Ok everything is locked, let's go.)

I nod and enter the main room. The girls gathered by the couch with the bags, looking at what seemed to be clothes, I guess the ones they would be sleeping in.

"The wardrobe of this couple is really 'fancy'..." Saya mumbles.

"Hmm, is that a bad thing?" Saeko adds as she lifts what seemed to be a see-through black nightgown. Saya casually lifts her head and looks at what Saeko was holding, her face instantly taking a very deep shade of red.

"I, I'm going to wear something from the stuff I brought with me." Saya starts digging through her bag furiously as she pretty much

shoves her face in it. Saeko just tilted her head while Hitomi was glancing around at the clothes.

"You'll use the top bathroom?" I ask, causing Saya to slightly jerk her body as she glances at me, probably startled as she had not realized I was in the room.

"Y, yes..." She responds as she turns back to the bag.

"Should we prepare another bottle with hot water?" Saeko asks right after.

"I'm fine with cold water." I answer as I shake my head and start heading towards the stairs.

(While I have the 'Pijamas' I picked from here. Why not use a new set now that I can. Having to wake up in the middle of the night in case of emergency aside. Sleeping half-naked next to Saya. Yea, even I got limits. Though it will be more important on what 'she' will wear. If she pops with that see-through nightgown for example. Uhh, I'm not gonna be held responsible for my actions then...)

With that, I move to 'my' room and grab a set of track pants, a shirt and some underwear. Then head back down, enter the 'study' and head to the bathroom that was in the left far end of the room. Locking the door behind me after entering the bathroom...

"This is the second time Saya gets to sleep with me on that bed huh?" I say to myself as I turn to the mirror.

"At least this time, she won't have to be all sneaky about it..." I chuckle as I start taking off my gear.

After taking a quick bath I wear my new clothes and clean some of my gear. Then exit the bathroom and enter the main room. The girls were nowhere to be found.

(Probably taking a bath, anyway, I should take my toothbrush from my bag.)

I nod and head to the couch, open my bag and pick my toothbrush from inside, my eyes falling on the clothes the girls were looking at, some of them on the chair, others on the couch and a couple of the table.

(I guess it's true what they say about girls and clothes, I just picked the first dark-colored thing I saw.)

I then move back to the bathroom and finish cleaning my gear and whatnot. After finally finishing. I return to the main room, take my bag and head up to the second floor. And judging from the sounds that were coming off from the bathroom, it was obvious where the girls were at.

I start walking towards my room. And realize something important...

(Uhh, the pool of blood is still here...)

I groan and return to the first floor's bathroom, taking a mop.

(Some of it might have dried but, but not much I can do about that.)

I then headed back up to the second floor, entered my room and cleaned the blood. Thankfully, no blood was on the bed and I could not see any visible blood splatter anywhere. None the less I also changed the sheets and blanket for good measure by using new ones from the closet. Then, I casually tossed everything out the window. Broom included. Because why not.

(And that's that.)

I 'wipe' my hands and sit on the bed, before completely lying down and closing my eyes.

(Uhh, where did I leave my clothes? The bathroom? Whatever, they were not dirty, I'll wear them again tomorrow...)

I let out a small sigh as I opened my eyes and start staring at the ceiling.

(We're really lucky these things don't seem to evolve, or mutate, or some other crap. God knows things could be much worse if they started running or climbing like in world war Z. Or start turning into volatiles from Dying light. Ughh, the night is bad enough now that we got no lights. Don't need a bunch of souped-up brain munchers than are weak to uv light that nobody has right now.)

I stayed like that for some time. Until the sound of running water and giggling girls from 'next door' stopped.

(Huh, they sure took their time, it's not like we're on a limited supply of water or something. But whatever, tomorrow at this hour, we should be at the mansion.)

I turn my body and look at the window to my left, the sky now having a deep orange color.

(Because if we're not there by the time the sun is out, we'll be in big trouble.)

And just on cue, I heard my door open. Or well, slightly open. I was able to see the door from the window's reflection without turning to look at it. What else I could also see, other than a half-opened door. Was a head with pink hair poking out from the side...

(What is she doing?)

The door slowly opens, Saya creeping inside, then closing the door behind her. From what I could see, her hair was down and was wearing a silky white, noodle strap nightgown that ended a little under her thighs. She then silently creeps to the edge of the bed, and stays there, staring with her arms folded.

"I know you're not asleep..." Saya says in a low tone. I just keep staring at her through the window's glass...

After a couple of seconds, she puffs her cheeks and pouts. Then closes her eyes and lowers her head, seemingly in thought. Before opening her eyes with a big nod, she then bends her legs as she unfolds her arms and lifts them up to shoulder height. And jumps, landing next to me with her knees, the force strong enough to actually lift me in the air for a second. I remained motionless as I landed back on the bed, ending back in the exact same pose I was before Saya jumped on the bed. I then felt Saya leaning on my right arm with both her hands, turning my head. I find her face now hovering above mine.

"Sup?" I raise an eyebrow as I look at the pouting pinkette.

"Don't sup me idiot." She answers with a frown as she keeps staring at me.

"I demand that you pay attention to me..." She whines, her voice weakening as she glances away.

(Demand it eh?)

I get up to a sitting position and turn to the 'sulking' girl.

"You got my undivided attention" I respond as I raise an eyebrow and smirk slightly.

"Hum." Was all Saya said as she threw the occasional glance at me, not moving from her spot, or saying anything else.

We then sat there for a couple of minutes, not doing anything...

(Oh fuck it.)

I lean forward and pass my arm around Saya's back. Then lie back down with my arm still around Saya, who 'fell' forward on the right side of my chest with a short yelp.

"W,what are you doing..." She asks with a short whine, but makes no effort to get off me whatsoever.

"Got bored of sitting." I answer flatly as I softly stroke Saya's back.

"Well, I was fine sitting, you didn't have to drag me down with you." She answers back with the same whining voice, her arms still folded under her chest.

"You can get up if you want." I answer as I bring my hand towards her neck, making it disappear under her hair.

"It's too much effort now, because of you." She replies as I feel one of her arms crawling under me, her other arm sliding over my torso and to my back, ending with her hugging me as she gets in a more comfortable position, wrapped her legs around one of mine. After she stopped moving, she let out a heavy sigh...

After a few minutes of silence, I found myself drifting to sleep. Saya occasionally nuzzling her face against me.

"Ughh, I'm going to fall sleep..." She groans as she lifts her head and shakes it.

"Ain't that the point?" I ask as I turn to look at her.

"I don't want to..." She whines as she bumps her head on my chest.

"I'd rather stay awake now. I can sleep in the car..." She adds right after.

"And who's going to be my co-driver?" I ask with a slight chuckle as I bring my hand from her back to her head, and fondle it.

"B, but. I, want to... c..dle" Saya buries her face between her shoulder and me as she finishes her sentence, muffling her sentence.

"You want to do what?" I ask with a one-sided smile.

"... uddle..." She 'answers' with her face still buried.

I put my hands to her sides and 'pull' her up. She groans slightly and wiggles herself until her face is on the pillow next to me. Her eyes wide open, staring right at me.

(Hmm, always though Saya had orange eyes. Seeing them from this close though, they are actually a dark shade of amber...)

"Q,quit staring at me. Idiot." She whispers as she looks away without moving her head.

Without speaking I bring my hand to her cheek, and run my finger on it. Saya takes a short breath as she turns her eyes towards my hand before looking away again. Her cheeks also starting to take a deeper shade of red. She then tightens her arms around me, scooting even closer, her body pressing up against mine, nuzzling her face on my neck. I'm not going to lie. I found myself smiling as I closed my eyes, tightened my arms around Saya. And, as I felt myself falling asleep...

(Uhh. Why does my neck feel, wet?...)

On the road once again

"To your left!" The white-haired girl shouts as she flies right over my head.

Glancing to my left and down. I see a giant metallic, half-snake, half humanoid dragon 'thing' coming right at me. Mouth gaping open, thousands of small rotating saw blades visible in its mouth.

I turn the right jet wing that's hovering right next to my shoulder and aim the thruster straight down, then blast it off. The serpent scheming right past my legs as it whizzes past me. The force of the blast making me roll over in the air, as the next moment I was able to focus the targeting system of my suit, I was upside down.

"Wide open." I chuckle as I throw a light punch to the right jet wing. The metallic contraption responding by lining up to my side, with the thruster now pointing forward. And as the circle on my visor started to home in on the back of the serpent, the tip of the thruster started to shrink in scale, turning into a muzzle.

'Target Locked' a notification appears on my visor's top-left part as the circle flashed red. With the flick of the wrist, the thruster activated, a stream of red light coming from the tip. Instantly impacting the back of the robot that started to flail about as it plummeted towards the ground.

"Activate second, third, and fourth cannons." I throw another light tap on the wing to my left. Causing it to also come to my left side and point forward, two more cannon-like wings coming up over my shoulders, also pointing forward, while the serpent-like robot crashed into the ground, creating a large crater at the point of impact.

Nonetheless, it lifted itself up and turned to face me. Pointing the giant ax it had its hand at me, the thrusters on the underside of its

body causing the trees around it to sway. The shot that connected to its back, seemed to only anger it even more.

"Naier what are you doing?! Move!" The flying, purple-haired girl shouts as she slices through a drone.

"No need. That killachine, it ain't getting off the ground again." I respond as all four thrusters 'break apart'. a bright red light shining through the cracks of the contraption along with a constant whirring sound that kept increasing in volume as the light through the cracks started to also increase in intensity.

'Charge. 80%' A text appears on the top right part of my visor as the metallic serpent then launches itself off in the air. Brandishing the ax in its hand as it started screeching like a banshee, dashing towards me...

'Charge. 100%' And, with a 'tick'. A deafening sound echoed as I got pushed back, my vision also taken away from the exceedingly bright light...

"Naier!" I hear a voice shout again...

"Naier..." The voice says again, this time in a much calmer tone.

"Come on, how long are you going to..." The voice then stops mid-sentence. After a short silence, I felt something touching my neck, poking a certain place on the left side...

"Ahh, this is. Uhh, I, might have gotten a bit too, fixated yesterday." The voice whispers.

"He, he might not see it. He's always wearing his idiotic mask after all." It adds right after.

"Come you stupid, think, think..." The voice then says in an annoyed tone.

"I'm going to bring it here..." It adds. And then, disappears...

After some time in silence, I let out a groan bringing my hand to my face. An annoying bright light poking straight into my eyes...

I let out a sigh as I opened my eyes. The light that kept bugging me, was coming from the open window to my left, the sun, being the annoying brat that it is, was shining straight into my face at full force...

"Ughh." I groan as I shake my head and turn away from the window, and end up facing the closed door...

It took me several minutes to realize that 'somebody' was missing. A certain pink-haired girl was not here. I blink a couple of times before lifting my head, looking around the empty room.

(Saya got up before me?)

I blink another couple of times before getting to a sitting position. Then stretch, before 'slamming' my hands on the bed, then continued to look around the room aimlessly. Until, the door to my right opened. Turning to it, I see Saya, her hair back to being twintails, and wearing her 'mall' attire, except that she still had the white jacket on top of the brown 'HQ' shirt, though she left it completely unbuttoned now. The rest was the same, the rather short shorts with the black suspenders and sports shoes.

"Finally awake?" She asks as she walks up to me, then sits on the bed while still facing me. Or, to be more precise, she was staring at my neck?

"Here." She says as she leaves the mask and balaclava on the bed.

"Uh, you didn't have to bring them up here. And I thought you didn't like it when I wore this?" I ask as I glance at my headgear, then back at Saya.

"I don't. But you're a persistent idiot so..." She responds, cutting her sentence as she looks away.

"I see." I answered blankly while staring at her.

"Well, well I'm doing you a favor, so be grateful." She then exclaims as she turns to me with a frown, her hands folded under her chest. I, just tilt my head slightly...

(My brain filter ain't on yet. Stupid ideas, flooding in.)

"Want a reward cuddle?" I ask with a slight smirk, causing Saya to blink at me a couple of times, her eyes wide open as her cheeks started to blush.

"I, can't get on the bed with these clothes. Idiot..." Saya whines in a low tone as she glances away.

(But ain't you already sitting on the bed?)

I slide to the side of the bed that she was on, then turn to her. Saya still had her arms folded, looking straight ahead of her, occasionally turning her eyes towards me.

With nothing happening for a couple of seconds, I stretch and let off a yawn as I fall back on the bed.

"I hate mornings..." I groan as I bring my hands to my face.

"The sun has been up for some time now. It's not that early..." Saya responds as I feel the bed move, followed by 'something' pressing up against my chest.

Removing my hands from my face, I find Saya's face hovering above mine. She was actually still 'sitting' next to me, but the upper part of her body was now on top of me. Her chest pressing up against mine, her hands folded on her sides, ending up with her fingers on my shoulders. And, before she, or I, could do anything else. Her glasses slipped from their place, and ended up landing on my face.

"Bah. Under attack, send backup." I groan as I shut my eyes and shake my head.

"S,sorry." Saya apologizes as she quickly picks the glasses from my face, folding them, and placing them next to us.

"So, slept well?" I ask as I open my eyes and slide my hands from her shoulder to her back. Saya just glanced away and nodded, her cheeks slightly flushed.

"You?" She asks back as she turns to me.

"I got no complaints." I answer as I bring my hand near the lower part of her waist, then slide it under her jacket and shirt, Saya going wide-eyed as I run my hand up on her back.

"What do you think you're, khumm..." Yet, before she could finish her sentence, she let out a soft moan as I lightly scratched her back.

"You don't like it?" I ask as I arch an eyebrow. Saya responds by closing her eyes and lowering her head, placing her forehead against my neck.

"A little more to the left..." She groans softly.

"I'll take this as a positive reaction." I say with a small chuckle. Then creep my hand up close to her armpit and skim my fingers around that spot, causing Saya to wiggle about with a slight giggle.

(Ohh? This must be the first time I actually hear Saya giggle.)

She then lifted her head to look at me. But, instead of the pout that I expected to see, she was actually smiling. And, with a quick motion, she leans forward. Planting a kiss on the right corner of my lips before getting up.

"We can't waste too much time here, we still have a mansion to reach." She says as she fixes her shirt and jacket, then turns to look away.

"I also feel like I could get addicted to this if I let you do it to me for too long." She whispers as she keeps looking away.

"A, anyway. Get dressed and come downstairs, everybody other than you is already up." She then adds before leaving the room in a quick pace, her head slightly lowered.

"Dressed? All you brought to me was the mask..." I say to myself after Saya had already left the room. After a couple of seconds, I shrug and get up, grabbing my mask and balaclava before heading into the bathroom on the second floor...

After washing my face and looking at the mirror, I noticed several red marks on my neck. And upon closer inspection, I could actually see. Teeth marks?

"Saya you friggin vampire." I say with a chuckle as I wear my headgear.

"No wonder you wanted me to wear this so badly." I shook my head and walked out of the room. Then headed to the first floor, where all three girls were waiting. Saeko and Hitomi dressed up in their 'normal' yesterday's clothes.

"Good morning." Saeko spoke up the moment she saw me, almost instantly tilting her head after she noticed that I was wearing my headgear with my 'pajamas'. Saya on the other hand, who was behind the other two girls. Let out a small relieved sigh.

"Umm, morning." Hitomi adds right after.

"Morning." I respond to the girls as I raise my arm, then start heading towards the first-floor bathroom.

"Left my clothes in the bathroom on this floor. Check that you didn't leave anything behind. We're leaving the moment I get out." Saeko nodded at me and turned to pick the two swords that were on the big, main table. Then headed towards the garage. Saya picking our bags from the couch, Hitomi helping Saya.

After entering the study and then going to the bathroom, I started changing to my actual clothes.

"Ok, mansion, extraction, and then hopefully, somewhere safe." I nod to myself as I glance at the mirror, then head back out.

"Ready?" I ask as I enter the room.

"Yes, let's go." Saeko, who was back in the main room, responds with a nod.

And so, we entered the car, Saeko opening the back garage door and gate before entering the car herself.

"Think we could take the boat with us?" Saya asks as she turns to me.

"The windows of the car don't come down to pass a rope around, and it does not have a rail to pass the rope on the roof either, we got nowhere to fasten it. And we are not dragging it behind with a trailer, makes it hard to maneuver and almost impossible to reverse." I answer as I keep looking at the side mirror while driving in reverse.

"Hmm, yea. I guess you're right." Saya nods slightly as she takes the map out of the bag that was next to her feet, along with her textbook. Which she then opens to the page with the information I noted about the roads.

"If all goes well, we will be there in less than two hours." She says after she runs her finger on the map.

"That's if all the roads we need to take are clear." She adds up.

"In other words, fat chance." I responded, Saya just nodded slightly.

Once the Humvee got out on the sand, I turned it to face towards the right before switching to 'D'.

(Last trip. Here we go.)

I nod slightly to myself and press on the gas.

"Based on the stuff you noted here, we have two roads we can take, one is near us, about two intersections down, the other is pretty far down, meaning it's closer to the mansion." Saya keeps looking between her map and the textbook as she speaks.

"Aight." I nod as I keep looking at the beach that extended ahead. Then bring my hand to the left part of my neck and massage it for a few seconds, Saya turning to stare at me.

"Is something wrong?" She asks.

"Vampires after my neck." I responded with a slight smirk. The two girls in the back seat turning to look at me with a questioning look. Saya on the other hand, started staring at me with an 'oh shit' expression. She then glanced around with a blushing face before looking back at the map that laid on her thighs...

(Don't do the crime, if you can't take the punishment.)

After that, we continued down the beach in relative silence...

"I wonder where they will extract us..." Until Hitomi spoke up.

"Japan has a lot of small uninhabited islands. While they might not be viable for a long term stay. As long as an infected person is not brought inside, it will be safe from the corpses. They can't swim, and the only way for them to reach it, is by randomly winding up there after falling into the deep sea, as marching into the sea from the beach will just push them back up on the shore" Saya keeps looking at her map as she speaks.

"Other than that, a cruise ship, or a plane carrier. The latter could act as a 'branch' point. Bring survivors there via a helicopter, then from there send them to a safe zone. This way the J.S.D.F would be able to also have better control of who goes where, or keeping people that they need, like engineers and doctors. And as bad as it sounds,

getting 'categorized' by the J.S.D.F. I mean. They are the best chance we have for an actual counter-attack against the corpses." Saya continues.

"Are they really going to help us though? The army I mean..." Hitomi looks out the window as she asks.

"You think they would try to kill us instead?" Saya asks, Hitomi does not respond.

"You watch too many movies. The army is a nation's biggest strength. So it's easy to make them the bad guy to increase the tension in a movie, making it look like the heroes are up against a powerful foe by themselves." Saya answers as she pushes her glasses closer to her face..

"I'm not saying we should blindly trust everything they say. But we should not take it like they are out to get us. They 'are' extracting people out after all. That means that they are already allocating resources for it" Saya adds.

(You know, mentioning the aircraft carrier. World war Z might be a good example of this. The 'army' there was actively helping civilians. To the point that the water filter of the aircraft carrier started to malfunction because of being overcrowded. Though they did send the people to camps afterward. That, for all the crap they got, the main dude's family didn't look any worse for wear when he got to them in the end)

"You, sure know a lot Saya." Hitomi says right after Saya's 'explanation'.

"Hum, of course. I 'am' a genius." Saya declares with a triumphant huff.

(Heh. I missed this punchline.)

I chuckle under my breath as I keep driving...

"Actually. what are we going to do with the car?" Saya asks as I leave the beach and climb up the road.

"You mean once we reach the extraction?" I ask as I glance at Saya, she nods back in response.

"Uh, good question. I don't intend to just hand it over, but if we enter the 'save zone' with it, then we won't have much of a choice, especially if there are armed soldiers there." I respond as I tilt my head.

"Then hide it outside?" Saya asks.

"A possible 'starting' choice. We could keep it as an escape plan. In case things turn out to be not as 'expected'." I respond, then turn to glance at Hitomi who was sitting behind Saya...

"But that's highly unlikely. Rei's dad should have the real deal in information concerning extraction points. What with him being a cop and what not." I add up as I turn back towards the street.

"And if we do get extracted, giving the car up is the only choice, it's not like we can take it with us. I also doubt that they will let us keep our guns..." I keep speaking as I take a turn towards the uphill road to my left, sending a corpse that didn't want to move flying through the air.

"I'm going to miss this car." I say nonchalantly as I keep driving.

"Why? It's way too uncomfortable." Saya says as she re-adjusts her butt on the seat.

(Sweetheart, if 'this' Humvee is uncomfortable, wait till you see the ones from my world, this is like a luxury limo in comparison.)

"It's a tank. On wheels." I respond flatly. Causing Saya to groan and roll her eyes, though there was a slight smile on her lips.

"You're such a kid sometimes." She says as she turns to me with a smug look.

"It's part of his charm. Don't you think?" Saeko responds as she leans over my seat.

"Liking tools of mass destruction makes me a kid? I thought it would make me something closer to a psychopath..." I say with a slight shrug. Saeko lets out a small giggle as Saya groans with a smile again, then turns back to her map.

"Well, I do not care 'what' you are..." Saeko leans towards my ear as she speaks.

"As long as 'I' am allowed to be part of it..." She whispers, then backs off and sits back to her seat.

"By the way. I need your preference for something." Saeko says as she turns to the bag next to her. I tilt my head as I start to hear shuffling. And then...

"Which one would you prefer?" She asks as she brings something between me and Saya.

Turning my head to my right, I see Saya looking at me, her eyes wide open, her face a deep red...

Actually, it was not 'me' she was looking at, but the nightgown Saeko was holding. It's just, I could see Saya through the gown. Actually, it's the same one Saeko showed Saya in the house, the black one...

"Absolutely not!" Saya shouts as she darts her head to Saeko. Who weirdly, just pulled back the dress without speaking back. Only to find out why seconds later...

"This one then?" She asks again...

This time she had, 'Something'. I don't even know how it's called. It looked like a sleeveless shirt, except the front part looked like a giant

upside-down 'V', starting from the collar, then splitting up to two parts that circled around to the back at about elbow height. If I had to guess, that thing would barely cover somebody's chest. Much less Saeko's. Not to mention that the 'lower' section was completely exposed...

"T, this is even worse than before!" Saya shouts again.

"Hmm, well..." Saeko tilts her head as she stops speaking, taking the second 'nightgown' back.

"I have not taken any other nightclothes with me..." She says with a 'worried' expression.

"I'm going to give you something then." Saya flatly declares. Saeko just turns to the fuming pinkette, and glances at her chest.

"They won't fit me. Your chest is too big compared to mine." Saeko responds with a calm voice. Causing Saya to blush even more as she reflexively brings the textbook over her chest, not that it helped much. Because, you know. It's kind of giant...

"A, and you focus on the road, pervert!" Saya shouts as she darts her head to me. I just chuckle and turn to look back at the street as I shake my head. All the while, Hitomi had pushed herself between her seat and the door next to her, watching the event unfold with a concerned look...

"You had that shirt you used last time, use that." Saya then adds as she turns to Saeko.

"Left it at the house." Saeko almost intently replies.

"W,well you can't wear these!" Saya frowns as she 'slaps' the textbook back on her thighs..

"Why? Is there a problem with them?" Saeko 'asks' with a questioning look.

"Their whole existence is a problem." Saya responds as she pouts.

"Hmm, you think so too Naier?" Saeko asks as she turns to me.

(Oh great, now they brought me into this...)

"You can wear whatever you want..." I respond as I keep looking at the street.

"You won't mind if I wore one of these tonight then?" She 'asks' again, a smirk slightly visible on her face...

"Uhh, well. There is one slight problem." I respond as I tilt my head.

"We might end up having to sleep with other people in the same room. And I might end up stabbing somebody if they end up staring too hard..." I added before the girls could speak.

"Oh..." Saeko's expression turned into a rather dumbfounded one, like she just realized that there's a chance of what I said can actually happen.

"Sadly, we're not prime guests like in Saya's house, we won't get preferential treatment." I add up.

"We could stay in the car then..." Saeko responds, obvious disappointment in her voice.

"Possible. But let's get there first. We'll act accordingly then." I responded as I glanced at Saeko, who didn't look very happy with my answer...

(Uhh, think, think, think. Ohh, Idea.)

"We could just go to the roof and watch the night sky then." I say as I look back at the street, and a few seconds later.

"Uhh. Too cheesy, forget I said that." I add as I tilt my head.

"Actually, that sounds like a delightful idea. I would like to ask that you do take me 'out' tonight." Saeko instantly responds as she leans on my seat again, bringing her face close to my ear once more.

"Just the two of us..." She whispers, then backs off again.

"Staying up late is counter-productive..." Saya butts in with a pout.

"Will it matter? We will be in a safe place, I don't see the problem of sleeping in a little late." Saeko calmly responds. Saya pouts even more and glances at me, before turning back to her map.

"Why do I always end up with the short end of the stick..." She whines in a low tone.

(Hmm, what we will do after we arrive aside. The road, thankfully for us, has been rather clean. Still, I can't say that I'm too keen on sharing a room with random people. Especially if two certain girls that I know will be as provoking as they always are when asleep...)

I casually swerve over a group of corpses, climbing up the pavement before driving back on the road.

(Even more so if I end up in a different room from them. Though I don't think that they will split us up after we get there.)

I let out a sigh as I kept driving...

(Ughh, I know I should not be jealous and all that crap. But, I can't be the only one who finds Saya and Saeko attractive. And I'm not exactly the perfect guy to be around with.)

"What are you so worried about?" Saya asks as she turns to me.

"What makes you think I'm worried?" I reply as I give her a quick glance.

"I could hear that sigh from miles away." Saya answers as she looks at me with a smug expression, her eyebrows making a straight line.

"My antisocial self is annoyed that I might have to be around people..." I respond with a slight chuckle.

(I'm obviously not telling them that I'm 'worried' that they might just up and leave me after we find more people. That could probably get them to actually get pissed...)

"We can just keep to ourselves. Just because they will be there, it does not mean we must make friends with them." Saeko adds as she leans between the two front seats.

"Yea, the last thing I need is another Sho talking to me." Saya groans as she looks back at her map.

"True, so, how far are we?" I ask in order to 'change' the subject.

"The mall will be to our left soon..." Saya answers.

"I see." I responded nonchalantly.

"We can take another route if you want." Saya turns to me as she speaks.

"The only reason we might need to change routes is if there are way too many corpses on our way. Otherwise, I see no reason to do so." I shake my head slightly as I keep looking at the road.

"Then keep going straight, the next turn you need to take is to the right, but it's still after a couple of intersections." Saya nods slightly and turns back to her map...

We then continued in silence, until we reached the turn Saya mentioned. The reason why she pointed this road out was because it was relatively medium in size, not too big to get clogged by fleeing cars, not too small to get blocked off by a single car. So after taking that turn, we continued forward.

"The next turn should be to the left. A couple of intersections later again, you should be able to make out the road as there is a car

shop / showroom by the turn we need to take." Saya points her finger at the road ahead as she speaks.

"Hmm, a showroom? Do they keep cars fueled up in there?" I ask as I tilt my head.

"Highly doubt it. Too many cars, and most of them should not actually get driven before being sold." Saya responds as she shakes her head.

"I see. No reason to stop then." I nod as I keep my eyes on the road.

And, a couple of flying corpses later, I spot a corner building made of glass, a bunch of expensive-looking cars parked outside.

"Uhh, turn left here? I ask as I stop the car.

"Ye..." Saya lifts her head as she answers, her sentence getting cut as she looks at the road.

"... Of course something like this would happen..." Saya groans as she looks back at the map.

"Let me find a new route." She adds as she keeps looking at the map.

To put it plainly, most of the cars that should have been parked outside of the building, were piled up on the road around the building. Some of them toppled over, others on their sides. Along with a 'car hauler' big-rig that blocked off most of the road to our left.

"What happened there?" Hitomi asks as she peeks between the two front seats.

"Either the owner tried to bail out some cars, or somebody tried to pull a grand theft auto by stealing the cars amidst the panic. No matter which of the two it was, it failed miserably". Just as I finished speaking, a corpse planted its face on my door's window.

Turning to look at it, my sight focuses behind it, at the glass-walled building itself.

(The insides are empty? Hmm)

"Got anything?" I ask as I turn to Saya.

"Ughh, give me a second, I'm thinking." Saya groans with an annoyed tone.

"Well, I got something. Buckle up." I respond as I press on the gas. Saya lifting her head in question. Then looking straight ahead through the windshield.

"You're not..."

"I am." I interrupt Saya as I press on the pedal harder, the car picking up speed as it makes a beeline towards the glass building.

"W,wait!" Saya shouts as she starts flailing about, grabbing her seatbelt as the map falls between her legs. Hitomi had also gotten back on her seat, while Saeko was peeking from behind my seat. And as I could actually hear her giggle, I suspect she was smiling with the whole situation.

And the Humvee zooms past the store's outer 'garage', climbs a small number of steps. And launches itself a few meters in the air crashing through the glass wall and landing inside the building seconds later. I steer the car to the right as it touches the ground, making it slide slightly as it kept going forward.

"Where did you learn to drive!?" Saya shouts as she hugs her bag, that used to be by her legs.

"Once again. Video games!" I respond as I drive straight through the other glass wall, ending up on the other 'side' of the building.

With the big rig and pile up now to our right. I drove straight, out of the outer garage and back to the street, taking a couple of corpses

along for the ride. The moment the car was in the middle of the street, I stopped and quickly exited the Humvee.

"What are you doing?!" Saya shouts.

"Give me a sec!" I shout back as I run to the front of the car.

(Wheels look fine, no glass shards visible, nothing seems to be stuck in the front or hood either.)

I nod and turn around. Only to see that one of the corpses that we dragged along had ended up crawling right next to the door I left open. It then slowly got up, and turned to 'look' inside the car. I could see Saya through the windshield, staring at the corpse wide-eyed.

"W,where is my gun!?" She shouted as she quickly started patting herself down. The sound causing the corpse to slowly hunch over as it started to limp towards the open door.

"Crap." I whisper as I run up behind the front door, giving it a strong stomp. The door smashing into the corpse, causing it to tumble down next to the back seat door.

(Sorry, seat's taken. Hitch another ride.)

I enter back into the driver's seat, and step on the gas as I slam the door shut.

"What did you do that for!" Saya shouts at me with one hell of a frown.

"Needed to check that the front didn't have any glass shards stuck in places it shouldn't." I respond as I turn to her.

"Ughh, stupid freaking idiot. Be more careful next time." She groans as she puts her hands on her forehead, letting out a sigh as she pulls her hands back towards the top of her head.

"Saya hates me now..." I whine with a sorrowful voice as I lower my head and sway it slightly.. Saya just, blinks at me a couple of times, looking stupefied. I guess my reaction was a bit 'too new'.

"I, I never said that I hated you, you idiot. Just, be more careful." She responds in a lower tone as she folds her arms, slightly lowering her head as she turns it towards the glove box...

(Don't. Don't. D...)

I let out a slight chuckle...

(Shit.)

Saya darts her head to me with a glaring pout, puffing her cheeks as she narrows her eyes.

"Idiot!" She grabs the map and throws it at me, though it just spun in the air and landed right next to my seat. Obviously not feeling satisfied with just that. She then leans to me and starts throwing quicks slaps on my arm with both hands. To be honest, she reminded me of that video where a Kitten was 'slapping' a cactus...

"Oi, don't attack the driver. Or we'll end up walking." I respond as I lean away from her...

"Then stop being so stupid, stupid." She answers back as she folds her arms.

"No can do. You wouldn't like me as much if I was not this stupid." I answer as I turn to Saya with a smirk. She just came back with a 'HUM' as she turned back to her seat and looked out the window...

I then picked the map that was next to me and opened it with one hand. Ending with it being upside down.

"Uhh, so I keep going straight?..." I ask as I tilt my head. Saya turns to glance at me, and let out a small groan as she takes the map...

"Keep going straight. The mansion is still a bit far off, but we should end up right next to it if we follow this road." Saya responds, a pout still on her face.

"Ok. Not much left to go." I nod slightly as I focus back on the road.

Destination reached

"L. Lion, eats antelope." Hitomi speaks up.

"A, alligator, eats turtles." Saya answers.

"T. Tarantula eats cicadas." Saeko responds right after.

"C. Crab, eats algae." I add right after.

"A. Alpaca, eats leaves. No, wait!" Hitomi speaks up again right after me, then instantly lifts both arms close to her face as she shakes them.

"Your alpaca ate hemlock. Too late, now it's dead. You lose." Saya responds with a grin as she lifts her finger, a triumphant smile on her face as she closes her eyes.

"Ahhh, my lama..." Hitomi responds as she lowers her head.

"Saya's too smart, it's like I'm handicapping myself by playing before her." Hitomi folds her arms as she lifts her head.

"Yea, why did we even agree to this game? Saya keeps winning every single time." I respond with a slight chuckle.

"Because nobody could think of anything else, don't blame me for your inability to think of something." Saya answers as she turns to me with her arms folded, her face still as smug as ever...

(Heh, I don't know how long we have been on the road. But seeing how we have been playing this for 'way' longer than I would like, I'd say I have been driving for quite some time. The place has also changed visually quite a bit. Houses have been replaced with tall buildings for quite some time now. And judging from the smoke pillars I see popping out in several spots around us, I'd say this place has been hit pretty hard...)

"So, Saya, care to tell me how far are we till our target?" I ask as I slow down the car next to an intersection.

"Hmm give me a sec." Saya nods and turns towards the map on her legs, then looks outside, then back at the map.

"Oh!..." Was all she said as she tilted her head.

"We are not far! just a couple of intersections to the right!" She lifts her head and turns to me with an excited face. An excitement, I honestly didn't share...

"So the mansion is next to 'this' shitstorm? Oh boy." I respond as I point from one side of the windshield to the other, showing the overall location.

"Not really, we should pass a small bridge before reaching the mansion, there is a river that cuts through this place. The bridge itself is not 'very' far from the mansion, so it should be guarded I guess? My Papa would send people to guard it if he was in charge of that place." Saya shakes her head as she looks back on the map.

"I see, so. I turn to the right?" I ask, and Saya nods.

And so, I turned the car to the right, and started going forward. The roads here, were in a pretty sorry state. But hey, tank on wheels don't give a fuck. And neither do I. As long as it's not a pile-up, corpse parade, or pit into the abyss, the car can handle it.

"Wonder if we can meet Takashi and the rest of the group after we get extracted." Saya says as she keeps looking at the map.

"Who knows, maybe if we look for them." I respond as I tilt my head.

"Hmm, I do hope we find them." Saeko says right after me as she leans between the two front seats.

"Yea, I for one, still owe Takashi a piece of my mind, for his last 'order'." Saya frowns as she folds her arms.

"True that..." Saeko responds as she glances at Saya...

"Did he do something bad?" Hitomi asks as she peeks from behind Saya's seat.

"You could say that." I answer as I tilt my head.

"And I'm not going to deny that I 'do' want to deck him..." I add right after.

(And not because in the corner of my head, I still have the scene with him and Saeko in the shrine, nope, definitely not.)

"Hmm the bridge should be close, next turn to the left, then right, should end up right in front of us then." Saya says after a short silence.

"Ai." I nod and do as she asks. Taking a left on the next turn, nearly trading paint with an abandoned sedan before going straight and...

"Huh? Did you hear something?" I ask as I slow down the car, all the girls turning to me with a weird expression...

"What are you ta..." Just as Saya was about to speak, I heard it again, and as Saya stopped talking, I guess she did too... distant gunshots...

"This can be either good, or really, really bad." I press on the gas again, turning right on the next turn. The bridge now straight ahead of us. And...

"..." I just stared.

"Oh no..." Hitomi, was the first one to speak.

"This, can't be good." I say after a couple of seconds...

The bridge had several cement barricades on it. The problem though was not that. It was that a couple of them looked, broken. And

judging from the black soot on the ground. It seemed that explosives had a hand in that outcome...

"No wonder we didn't see a lot of corpses around..." Saeko was the next one to speak, pointing at several corpses on the other side of the bridge, all of them moving towards the deeper part of the landmass after said bridge. Towards several columns of smoke.

"Please tell me today is BBQ day and the smoke is coming from giant grills." I press on the gas as I give one last glance at the distance smoke columns, before looking back at the bridge. With the barricade turned to dust, we were able to pass through it with the car.

"Everything will be fine, right?" Hitomi asks.

"They have soldiers there, they should be able to deal with any infected that got through..." She adds with a half-broken voice.

"Corpses don't use explosives." I answered flatly. Causing Hitomi's face to turn even grimmer.

"But... but, why? Why..." Hitomi lowers her head as she leans back on her seat...

"I see another barricade up ahead." Saya points her finger ahead as she squints her eyes...

"Breached..." I respond as I also narrow my eyes.

"The hole does not seem too big." Saya adds right after.

"Enough to let corpses enter, not enough let cars enter. Or Leave." I say as I glance at the corpses over the second barricade.

"What are we going to do?" Saeko asks as she keeps leaning between the two seats with a serious expression.

"We are going in, obviously." I respond as I glance at her, she nods without speaking back.

After reaching the next barricade, while running over any corpse I saw like they were giving off points, I stop and look around.

"That alleyway to our left, I will park the Humvee in there, then use the net. If 'people' attacked, I don't need them seeing this car." I switch to reverse and drive the car into the alleyway.

"Too narrow to open the doors, out through the hatch." I switch the ignition off and turn to Saeko and Hitomi, Saeko nods and climbs out, Hitomi, did not respond. She instead looked as dejected as when we first found her...

"Hitomi. Disappointment is something that will be following us no matter how much we don't want it. If you want to find the end of this tunnel, then you need to keep yourself on your feet, nobody is going to help you up if you fall." I say as I get to the back seats and get the net.

"What's the point..." Hitomi responds with a sullen face.

"I got nobody waiting for me either way..." She adds, then lifts her face.

"Thank you for bringing me here, I can go by myself now." She adds with a slight 'smile'.

"I said I would bring you to an extraction point. If this ain't an extraction. Then we ain't done on my part of the deal." I respond as I turn to Saya.

"Keep the gun with you, we'll stay close-range combat for now, fire only after I fire. Also, take a couple of dynamites." I say as I keep looking at her. She nods with a serious expression and moves up next to me, then exits the car after grabbing a couple of red sticks. Leaving me alone with the dejected girl...

After a couple of seconds of silence, I let out a sigh...

"You want to give up?" I ask. Hitomi just keeps looking away.

"You want the last moments of your life to be misery caused by some random schmucks you never even saw?" I ask again.

"It's, not this easy..." Hitomi responds without looking at me.

"Never said it's easy. If you want to off yourself, I am not going to stop you. But I said I will bring you to a safe place, I intend to do so. So make your choice, you can come with us, or you can leave. The choice is yours." I glance at the hatch before looking back at Hitomi.

"I'm, sorry. I understand..." She wipes her eyes and nods a couple of times.

"But, I can't fight..." She says as she turns to me.

"You won't, just stay in the middle and keep as quiet as you can." I respond as I glance through the windshield, Saya and Saeko waiting near the alleyway's end.

"Ok..." Hitomi nods meekly before getting up, clumsily climbing out.

(... I knew she would be fast to 'lose' hope after what she went through, but I didn't expect it to be 'this' fast. Let's just hope that there are at least 'some' survivors left.)

With the net in one hand, and Scar in the other, I exit the car. Leaving the hatch very slightly open as I cover the car.

(Ok, not smart, but the only other way in, is through the trunk, I need to be able to get back inside fast. So, let's go...)

I nod slightly and walk down to the hood, then jump down the car as I strap the gun on me, gripping the blade's hilt that was on my side as I walk up to the trio.

"Ok, keep silent, we will be using close-range weapons, so Saeko and me in the front, Hitomi in the middle, Saya, watch our rear. We are going in as fast as we can, so both me and Saeko will be in the front to clear whatever might come our way..." I glance at the girls as I speak, then turn to the smashed barricade. Saeko nods and draws her sword with a slight smile, while Saya walks to the back of the group.

With that, we walked past the second barricade. The place around seemed to be a residential area, as I could see houses once again. And, the first casualties from this attack were already visible. Two dead soldiers were a bit further in...

I walked up to the one that was facing up to the sky and looked at the body...

"Bullet holes. They got shot, and corpses seem to ignore them. Meaning they died quite some time before the corpses actually got here. Whoever did this, planned ahead..." I kneel down and give the body a quick pat-down.

(Looted.)

"Eyes open, they had guns, and knew how to use them." I glance at the girls as I get up, then turn to walk forward...

While there was a rather big amount of corpses ahead of us, all of them were going towards the same way we were, attracted by the gunshots that could be heard further in. So, we kept moving in silence, along with the corpses. Until, a loud gunshot echoed, one that was way closer compared to the others we were hearing so far. And, one of the corpses ahead of us fell to the ground.

(Shit! Somebody is shooting towards us?!)

I quickly turned around and motioned everybody to hide behind the nearby parked cars, pushing Hitomi, who did not move, with me as we ran to the left, hiding behind a parked car...

"T, they're shooting at us?..." Hitomi asks with her eyes wide open, visible distress on her face.

"Don't rush out, we don't know if they're on our side or not." I whisper back as I bring my finger to where my mouth should be. Then sheath my sword and take the scar in my hands. The gunshots echoed louder and louder as the corpses that were ahead of us slowly started to decrease. Until, I could make out a couple of figures walking in the opposite direction compared to everything else...

"... These, are not J.S.D.F soldiers." Saya whispers to me as she grips the Mp5.

"Back off and stay quiet." I whisper back as I lower myself and glance at the road...

(Four of them, black, gray and white camo outfits, they look pretty decked out, mercenaries? Hmm, they look like foreigners too, and not because one of them is almost two meters tall, completely bald and with a Santa Claus beard, also sporting a heavy machine gun. The one next to him looks like a dwarf in comparison, stocky, much like Salvador from Borderlands 2. He seems to be holding an assault rifle that I can't exactly make out. The one in the leftmost corner is black, also tall. Uhh, I see, explosives on his vest. Demolitionist? The rightmost, I can't facially make out, he is wearing a full-face helmet and armor, carrying what seems to be a full-auto shotgun, an AA-12.)

As the squad got near, I could hear speaking, English speaking...

"The fuck did that egghead go? Come here to extract my ass, he said. And by the time we got here he was moved to a different location. Fucking bullshit man!" The dwarf shouts as he kicks a nearby can with his boot.

"When is our extraction coming?" The black one asks.

"Two days by the port. We need to have the egghead by then, or we'll be left in this shithole. They won't take us out of here if they

can't verify that their little mole is either dead, or with us." The skinhead look-alike responds.

"Hey quiet down, you want everybody to hear?" The full face mask man speaks up.

"Are you for fucking real? Look around you Robocop, there's nobody around who CAN hear us. All there is around is walking meat. And whatever fucking slash eyed ladyboy we found could not even fucking speak English! It's the international damn language, learn how to fucking speak it!" The dwarf one shouts, turning to the armored one as they walk up next to us...

(Keep walking...)

They then walk past us, and over the barricade. Also walking past the alleyway that the car was inside without stopping. I then turn to the girls and motion them to stay put.

(As much as I want to 'ask' them a couple of questions, four nutjobs armed to the teeth is not something I want to fight right now.)

"Did one of them just say mole in english?" Saya 'asks' with a whisper as she turns to me with a questioning look.

"Yea, I'm pretty sure I heard that too." I respond.

"And that video we saw at my house, with the scientist. He said that this 'thing' was manufactured..." Saya adds as she narrows her eyes.

"Wrong time to think about this Saya, leave it for when we're not in the open." I say as I turn to her, she looks at me for a couple of seconds, then nods.

(But it should be something I must not forget. Somebody hired mercenaries, to come here post-outbreak and extract a 'mole'. Could

have nothing to do with the outbreak. Could be everything. It's also something that was never mentioned in the anime.)

After I saw the four mercenaries pass over the bridge and disappear in the distance...

"Move, let's go." I motion with my hand and get up. Then start moving deeper into the 'evacuation zone' once again.

With the corpses now 'dead', we just walked straight down the road without resistance. I, could not see anything that seemed remotely close to a mansion yet, or any sort of refugee camp, or its remains. The only thing that I could see that signified that this place was under guard, was the occasional 'really' dead soldier. So, we kept moving forward for some time. Until we started hearing something again, the sound of fire, and screaming. Along with the same 'distant' shots we heard before, except they did sound so far now.

"These sound close, come on." I glance behind me before I start a light jog, gripping the scar H...

Upon reaching the next intersection, I see that it was connected to a bridge, the left and right sides leading to the road under the bridge, with the bridge itself continuing forward. Most importantly though, all the noise was coming from our right, towards a giant building. Fires raging all around it.

"What do we do now..." Hitomi asks.

"Check the situation." I answer as I walk toward the bridge, stopping in its middle while looking at the burning mansion. It was not too far from where we were, as I could actually see the corpses limping about inside, I could also see people running around. But most importantly, I could see what seemed to be a landed military helicopter on the left part of the building's giant front 'yard', five soldiers on the helicopter, with corpses swarming under it. The gunshots we have been hearing, yea, they were the ones responsible.

Two army men were shooting the corpses under them, another one was waving his hand towards the main building, and judging from the survivors I could see running towards it, I guess he was ordering them to go there. I could also see several tents, military trucks and some jeeps. A couple of them, on fire.

"They're still fighting." I nod as I kneel and place the gun on the bridge's rail, using it as a bipod.

"We are going to help?" Saeko asks.

"Good deed of the day." I respond as I look through the scope.

"I will try to make them realize we are here, after that, we will toss a stick of dynamite on the street below, the sound should make the corpses move out the mansion. I just hope these soldiers know how to react to an opening." I respond as I focus on a corpse that was walking towards the survivors from the right side of the mansion's yard.

"Anything that comes towards us, light it up." I say as I wait for the moment where the soldiers were not shooting. Then pull the trigger.

The corpse I was aiming plummeted to the ground, but keeps moving about. I then look towards the soldiers, to see two of them looking towards me. I raise my hand as I keep looking through the scope, they respond by raising their hands as well.

"Alright they know we are here. Saya, I'ma need two dynamites." I respond as I glance at the pinkette who was watching over one side of the bridge. She nods and hands me her bag. Which I opened, and then pulled out the two dynamites.

I light one up and throw it over on the road below, a loud explosion echoing several seconds later. All the corpses instantly came to a halt, and slowly turned around...

Until one soldier opened fire again...

"Fucking idiot." I growl under my breath.

I look back towards the trigger happy soldier, to see the soldier who was standing behind him throwing a slap to the back of the helmet of the trigger happy guy. Causing it to cover his face all the way to the mouth. The guy then turns around as he fixes his helmet, finally pulling his finger from the trigger. One of the soldiers turns to me again, and starts waving both arms in the air widely.

"Don't fuck this up again." I light the dynamite again, and toss it. A second explosion soon after, the corpses changing direction once again...

This time, the soldiers strayed quiet, and the moment the heli was free of rotting walkers, they climbed down and ran towards the main building, knocking a couple of corpses on the ground as they ran towards the mansion's front door. And the moment they reached it, they started banging on it.

"Naier, we have corpses coming towards us from our left." Saeko speaks up as she turns to me.

"Open fire, I need more time." I respond as I keep looking at the soldiers through the scope.

The moment the mansion door opened, three of them went inside, while the other two ran towards the big military trucks. And after each soldier got into one, they turned them on and drove them towards the mansion's front door. Which flung open the moment the first truck stopped, people running in a panic to climb up the back side. The other three soldiers then also exited the building, and as the trucks were already making enough noise as it was, they instantly started shooting. One of them looked at me and started pointing his finger to my left.

"Ok, back to the car, move, move." I get up and motion the girls to move. Saeko makes a quick dash forward, decapitating a single corpse before backing off with a nod, turning around to head towards

the road that led to the car, Saya picked her bag and started running, Hitomi followed behind.

With all the corpses on our way back still dead, we reached the barricade without much of a fuss.

"We need to get the car through here. More dynamite, we'll blow the hole open." I speak as we reach the smashed barricade.

"Ok." Saya nods and opens her bag, then hands me the remaining three dynamites.

"Get in the car." I say as I take the sticks. Lighting all of them on fire and stuffing them in the holes next to the already smashed barricade. Then ran back to the car, the girls waiting in front of it.

I grab the net as I climb up, taking it off and opening the hatch, then throw it inside as a loud explosion goes off behind me.

"Damn, that was loud." I shake my head as I enter the car, then move to the front seat. The girls followed behind shortly after, with Saeko sitting next to me on the front seat this time around.

I turn the car on and step on the gas, turning to the left the moment I exit the alleyway, a wide hole visible in the barricade now. Wide enough for the Humvee to pass...

I then drove straight until I reached the bridge, then turned to look past Saeko's window. To see one of the trucks still there. The moment the truck driver saw me, he flashed the headlights of his truck and started moving, turning to the right. Aka, my straight ahead. I nod and press on the gas...

The road was now making a slight downward slope as I kept driving forward. And a minute later, I see one of the trucks zooming past from the right to the left, two intersections down from where we were.

(There.)

I nod and keep driving forward, taking whatever sorry corpse didn't move out the way with me. And the moment I reached the second intersection, I stopped. Turning to look for the second truck. To find it passing right in front of me seconds later while honking its horn.

"Well, that could have been a lame way to fail, crashing into the friendly truck." I chuckle as I turn to follow the second truck...

(Holy shit that escalated quickly...)

I let out a sigh as I glanced at the people on the back of the truck that was ahead of us, a couple of them also looking back towards us.

"You saved these people." Saeko says as she turns to me.

"Yea, so now they owe us." I respond as I glance at her. She just answered with an "Ohh?" As she arched an eyebrow with a slight smirk.

After driving for a couple of minutes, the trucks finally stopped on an empty road. The soldiers then climbed out of the trucks, gathering up in one spot before walking towards our car. In the meantime, I opened the door and exited the car, but kept most of my body behind the open door.

"You're not military." A soldier with the rank of second lieutenant up speaks as they close in...

"And you're not dead. You're welcome." I respond as I fold my arms over the door and lean on it...

The soldier who spoke to me frowned a bit, before a new one with a beret came over. The two stars on his uniform, along with the soldier who moved out of the way and stood in attention telling me he was a Major general.

(Whoo look at them starz, my old self sort of wants to reflexively go to attention and blurt out name and unit.)

"Where did you find this car civilian? It looks military grade." The asks.

"Friend of a friend, based on what she told me, her friend was in the airport last time they spoke." I respond, the frowns as he folds his arms.

"The airport? That location was almost lost after the E.M.P.s fell." He replies.

"Almost?" I ask back.

"The chief of the first squadron in the prefecture police managed to reduce casualties. Thanks to her we managed to set up base nearby in order to launch a counter-attack." He answers.

(Ohh, that's new. I do remember that in the manga Rika single-handedly supposedly saved a bunch of people in the airport, from what a soldier said. But I didn't know anything about a base.)

"That place is also the nearest safe base considering our location. We are going to head there and assist with the takeover, then use the airport to ship the people out by boat or plane. If you want to get out of here, you will want to come with us. We are going to make a short stop here to plan our route, then leave." He adds as he turns around, motioning his soldiers to follow him with his hand.

I nod slightly and enter the car.

"You heard him?" I ask. The girls nod.

"So, airport, or somebody got a better idea?" I ask again.

"Airport." Saya responds Saeko nodding after her.

I nod as well, and turn to look ahead...

"Umm." Hitomi then speaks up as she wiggles about on her seat slightly.

"I'm sorry for before, thank you, for helping me..." She says as she slightly lowers her head.

"Don't mention it." I respond.

"Umm, I know these trucks have survivors, but umm. Can I stay in this car until we reach the airport please?" She asks, I just nodded without speaking.

And a couple of minutes later, one of the soldiers with the rank of private comes up next to the hood, slamming it lightly before pointing ahead.

"We are leaving, you're coming?" He asks.

"Yea, I'll stay behind the trucks." I respond, the soldier nods and runs back to his truck. And shortly after, the trucks started to move again.

"Hmm, but, this won't do..." Saeko tilts her head slightly as she folds her arms under her chest. And, I swear, I could see two guys from the truck ahead of us staring at her 'assets'.

"Ehh?" I glance at her as I raise an eyebrow.

"You were supposed to take me out to see the stars tonight..." She responds as she turns to me with a slight smirk.

"Huh, I don't see why our plans would have changed, it will just be a different location. Hey, they might even take back the airport, more space to stroll about." I respond as I turn to her.

"Hmm, true. I trust your words then." She answers with a slight smile.

(I actually want to spend time with her more than she can imagine, but uhh, angry pinkette flag confirmed if I say that out loud.)

"So, want to go on with the game?" I ask as I glance at the girls, all of them looking at me with a questioning expression.

"You know, the one with Hitomi's dead Lama." I respond, getting a unified 'Ohh' as an answer.

"Humm, how about we place a bet this time around." Saya 'asks'.

"Sorry, but I will have to decline." Saeko responds almost instantly.

"Ohh, you're scared?" Saya asks with a grin.

"If it means losing my allotted time with Naier, then yes, I am." Saeko responds flatly.

"Ahh? Never thought the daughter of the great Busujima family would shy away from a challenge. Guess I had a wrong image of you." Saya responds, the grin still on her face.

"Hmm? And I didn't know that the daughter of the Takagi's would use such underhanded methods to get what she wanted." Saeko answers back, also with a slight grin. Causing Saya's eye to twitch as her toothy smirk became one-sided.

And while the two girls were going at each other. I was staring at the two dudes in the truck. Who were 'still' staring at the wrong spot...

(... I'ma stabby staaab, sommmbodyyyy todaaayyy~)

I swerved the car slightly to the right, seeing the two guys turning their heads in unison to 'their' right as the car changed position.

"Why, these two damn hobos..." I groaned under my breath, causing Saeko to turn to me as she tilted her head.

"Is there something bothering you?" She asks.

"Floran wants sssstab monkey man." I growl in a low tone, causing Saeko to blink at me with a blank stare.

"Umm, forgive me. But, I fear I did not understand what you just said." She responds to me with genuine confusion.

"I think, that's a line from a video game..." Hitomi speaks up.

(Ah? A fellow gamer? Wait, starbound exists here?)

"Oh, I am sorry. I never did play video games, so I am not very well informed on the matter." Saeko glances away as she answers.

"Yea, don't remember if you actually mentioned this before, or if my image of you had you not playing video games from the get go. But I sort of expected that answer." I respond and laugh through my nose as I glance at her.

"Heh, not that it really matters now anyway. We don't even have electricity, much less a console or a gaming Pc." I add up.

"Nerd." Saya chortles.

"I can't be a nerd and an idiot at the same time Saya. A nerd is supposed to be smart." I respond as I tilt my head.

"Uhh, you're the exception, you are both a nerd and an idiot." Saya responds with the same gleeful tone as she folds her arms and leans between the two front seats.

(When did she get in such a good mood?)

"Of course..." I shake my head as I chuckle, keeping my eyes on the road.

Just then, Saeko closes her eyes and stretches, or well, folds her arms behind her back and stretches.

"Tired?" I ask, glancing at the two guys who were now staring even more intently....

"I am sorry, a sudden wave of fatigue just hit me." Saeko responds as she opens her eyes.

"The front seat is probably crap to sleep on. Want to go in the back seats?" I ask.

"Hmm, maybe for a bit..." She nods slightly and gets up from her seat, crawling to the middle platform in the back before laying down, after placing a sleeping bag under her that is...

With Saeko now gone, I glance at the duo in the truck again. One of them makes a 'tch' motion with his mouth before looking away, the other following suit shortly after.

(Annoyed? Gooooood. I will still sssstaby stab you though. Even if I was actually boring human race in that game.)

Convoy

(I'm telling ya, sleepiness, It's contagious...)

I glanced behind me as I kept driving, all three girls, fast asleep. It was not that late to be honest, must have been what, a little after noon?

(I guess they were all really tired deep down. And now that we are 'safe', considering our situation. It rushed up to them...)

"But now, I have nobody to speak too..." I groan silently as I rest my head on the seat's headrest...

(The 'peeping duo' has also given up glancing our way, and are now staring at some poor girl in the truck. Guess I ain't smexy enough for them...)

"Still want to sssstabby stab them though." I 'hiss' in a low tone before silently chuckling, so I wouldn't wake up our 'sleeping beauties'.

(Still, I wonder how we will pass the bridge that connects to the next landmass that leads to the airport. Based on the map, the man-made island that the airport is located on is at the leftmost landmass. The same one that had our school, and my apartment. Huh, talk about going full circle.)

Also, by having the two giant ass trucks in front of me now, I have yet to see a single 'walking' corpse so far...

(Still, if Rika is at the airport, I wonder if I can meet her. Jokes aside, I owe her for the guns and car. Huh, good thing the girls didn't ask how I knew that Shizuka's 'friend' was at the airport. As when she spoke with her in the estate right before the blast, I was with the Humvee, not the group...)

We were also already riverside, with the river to our left. As the mansion itself was already relatively close to the landmass's end. I could also see the targeted bridge in the distance. It's just that, we had to take a couple of side trips to avoid a couple of no-go roads. Other than that, smooth sailing. To the point that I was honestly starting to doze off myself...

At least, until I noticed the truck in front of me opening its hazards lights. It then slowly slowed down, coming to a full stop after a couple of seconds, with me stopping the Humvee behind it. The driver then opened the door, and after a quick glance outside, he jumped down the truck and ran towards my car. I, in the meantime, open the door slightly.

"The Major General wants to use some of your dynamites to clear an infected horde up ahead." The second lieutenant glances at the sleeping girls as he stops by my door.

"Give me a second..." I close the door and get off my seat, then go to the back seats, sort of ending up on top of a sleeping Saeko. I then grab two sticks of dynamite while being careful to not actually step on the sleeping girl. Then, I back off and head back to my seat. The soldier still staring at the sleeping girls.

"You're staring at the wrong 'dynamites'." I say as I open the door and extend my arm towards the soldier, dynamites in hand. The guy turns to look at the two sticks, and frowns.

"We are going to need more than two." He responds.

"You can deal with a horde by using just one." I also responded.

"And if we find another horde, we will have to stop and come to your car again. If you want to come with us, then you have to follow the orders given to you." The soldier answers back.

"First. You will have to stop either case if you find another horde, or you risk blowing yourself up if you make a crap throw from inside the

truck. Second, we are coming 'with' you, not 'under' you. I am willing to help you get there, but I'm not going to give you everything I have just because you want me to. If we have a problem with that, we can head to the airport by ourselves. If you want me to follow your orders like a good 'civilian'. Then first, get rid of the corpses that are putting us 'civilians' in danger, without my help." I wiggle the dynamites at him as I speak. The soldier scowls slightly and takes the dynamites.

"I will let the General know of what you think." He responds as he turns to leave.

(Bite me.)

I closed the door as I kept looking at the soldier, who climbed up the truck, opened the door, and started speaking to somebody inside without getting inside. I guess the General was in there with him? After a couple of seconds, the soldier climbs back down, throws a glance towards my general direction, then turns to run towards the first truck, disappearing from view by going in front of the first truck...

"Hope they don't blow their own shit up..." I glance through the window to my left as I rest my hands on the steering wheel.

"Wait. If they'll use dynamite now, won't that fr..." Just as I say that and turn towards the sleeping girls, a loud explosion echoed...

"W,whath's goig on?!" Saya almost instantly springs into a sitting position, though, her eyes were still half-closed. And judging from her 'wording'. I don't think she was actually 'awake', as much as being it reflexes that got her up.

"Soldiers are clearing the road ahead, nothing to worry about." I respond as I glance at the other two girls...

(They didn't even budge, I'd understand if Hitomi was out cold, but Saeko too? She must have been really tired...)

"Huuumm..." Was all Saya said as she rubbed her eyes with one hand, yawning in the process.

"How far are we?" She asks as she finally opens her eyes, tapping around her seat with her hand for her glasses.

"I can see the bridge, that's about it..." I respond as I turn to look at Saya.

(I don't know if it's her sleepy face, or her overall 'I'm half asleep' posture. But ugghh, I want to head rub a pinkette.)

Just as Saya picks up her glasses, I turn around to see the trucks had started to move.

"Also. A soldier needs to get ssstaby stabbed." I add with a slight chuckle as I start driving.

"Uhh, what?" Saya asks as she slowly moves from her seat to get to the front seat next to me.

"Nothing..." I respond as I glance at Saya. Who was probably still getting her bearings together, as she didn't bother asking anything else.

"Ahhh, I feel so damn sore, why did I fall asleep with my twintails, my head hurts now..." Saya groans as she puts her hands on the roof and stretches by arching her back forward...

(... Focus, on, the, road...)

Not gonna deny though, I did throw a couple of glances at Saya. And, guess who else darted his head towards Saya while making a half retarded 'Ohh' with his mouth. Yea, one of the two 'bros' was pretty much drooling now...

(Of course...)

"Uhh, Saya. I don't mean to interrupt your stretching. But you got yourself a, 'fan'..." I keep staring at the guy as I speak. While Saya just turned me with a question expression as she undoes her twintails...

"Pervert..." She responds with a slight pout after a few seconds, her face taking a slight shade of red...

"Uhh, yea, no. Look straight ahead, drooling dude in the truck." I answer as I point towards the guy with my head...

"Huh?" Saya tilts her head as she narrows her eyes, then turns to look ahead. The moment she locked eyes with the guy, he started 'hopping' his eyebrows up and down...

(Is he supposed to be flirting now? Because he looks so ridiculous that I might actually laugh. Then stab his guts...)

Saya on the other hand, did not seem to share the same mentality, as she frowned while leaning slightly forward, folding her arms. She then stuck out her tongue at the guy...

(... What are you, Seven?)

She then gets off her seat and crawls up next to me, before wrapping her arms around my right arm, grinding her cheek against my shoulder as she turned to the guy with what I think was a smirk? Then stuck her tongue out again...

(Ok, she must definitely be half asleep...)

The guy puts both hands on his cheeks and makes another 'Ohh' motion with his mouth as he lifts both eyebrows. He then points at himself, then at Saya, then at me, then makes a 'three' sign with his fingers as he starts hopping his eyebrows again...

(Did he just? Ok, you what chad-bro? Want a three-way? I'll give you fucking three-way...)

I lift my free hand and point at myself, then at Saya, then behind me towards Saeko, and also make a 'three' sign with my finger. The guy slaps his hands to his cheeks again and makes an even more exaggerated 'Ohh' with his mouth. He then closes his eyes and makes an 'ok' sign with each hand while keeping them close to his face, lifting his head slightly as if he's smelling something. Before doing a double thumbs-up...

(And, did I just accidentally join the Chad-bro club? Well, shi...)

My thoughts got cut short as I felt something slap me in the back of my head. Turning to my right, I find Saya staring at me with a blushing pout.

"Yea, that was a bit too 'jock' of me. My bad..." I respond as I tilt my head.

"Mhm, I hate people that try to show me off to others like I'm some sort of prize they caught. So don't do that..." Saya nods as she nuzzles her face against my shoulder and closes her eyes. Then fixes her posture as, there is a shifter between me and her after all...

So, with that 'over'. We continued forward, the bridge becoming bigger by the second. Until, we were one intersection away from it...

(Are we going to dynamite our way through the bridge? Actually, won't the bridge be clogged with cars? Or be barricaded?...)

All these questions got answered the moment we took the next turn, the giant bridge coming into full view. Four lanes that were for traffic going the same direction as us, and four lanes for oncoming traffic, with a big gap between the eight total lanes.

Now 'our' lanes, where a definite no go zone. I could not even see the road between all the abandoned cars, add that I could see corpses roaming between them. The 'oncoming' lanes on the other hand, were pretty much empty. Though, they did have five cop cars,

two 'S.A.T' vans that looked like less 'blocky' Lenco Bears, and some crowd safety barriers that blocked the road.

The trucks once again stopped, and this time, all of the soldiers climbed down. And almost instantly opened fire at the nearby corpses...

"They better know what they're doing..." I whisper to myself as I look at the corpses on the bridge that turned stare towards our direction before they started to 'walk' towards us. Though most of them just ended up bumping from one car into another car.

One of the soldiers then turned to me and waved his arm.

(Huh, guess I'm not a civilian that needs protecting now?)

I nudge Saya as I open the door, who responds by tightening her grip on my arm with a soft groan.

"Oi, I got to exit the car." I poke her cheek as I try to move again, she just replies with a groan again...

(Ok you asked for it.)

I place my hand to her side, and squeeze.

"Yiiaaw!" Saya almost instantly darts her eyes wide open as she bends sideways to cover her sides with her elbow.

"Got to exit the car Saya." I say once again.

"You didn't have to jab me you idiot!" Saya whines with a rather loud voice as she massages the point I squeezed, letting go of me at the same time.

"You wouldn't let me go, and it looks like that mister army man over there is trying really hard to recruit me for the greater cause." I respond with a slight chuckle as I exit the car and close the door. Bag in hand.

As I start walking towards the soldiers, I turn around to see the corpses that were now walking towards the Humvee, probably attracted by Saya's yelp.

"Oi deepshits! Change direction!" I shout as I turn around again to walk towards the soldiers while tightening the bag on my back. Giving one last glance behind me seconds later to make sure that the corpses had indeed changed direction.

The moment I got close to the soldiers, the M. General turned to me.

"You are armed, if you are not willing to give your weapons, then you will help us." He pretty much declares before turning towards the car barricade in the distance.

"We will pull the hand brakes from the three cop cars and one van, then push them out the road. The vans might be functional, but we don't have time to look for the keys, we have panicking civilians in the trucks. So focus on clearing the roadblock." The M. General then turns to the other soldiers.

(Panicking? As in trying to get into threesomes with strangers?)

"If they are locked, shoot the windows. You need to have been done yesterday, move out." He then motions with his hand before walking back towards the truck he was in.

(Not going to join the fun boss man?)

I chuckle softly as I follow the soldiers who carved a path towards the roadblock. And once there, one of them with the rank of private turned to me.

"Check the S.A.T van, these usually have bulletproof windows, so if it's locked don't shoot it." The private says as he points to my right.

(Now I'm taking orders from a friggin private?...)

I head to the van nonetheless, and after quickly checking under it, I try the front door. Which opened wide...

(Nice~)

I climb in the car, and after checking the interior, I pull the handbrake.

(Done, and done.)

As I was about to exit the van, I noticed that the back of the van had equipment hanging on its walls. Vests, helmets, arm guards, belts, handcuffs, ammo pouches.

(Hmm?)

I tilt my head and move past the two front seats, stopping in the middle of the van.

(Black advanced combat helmets...)

I take one helmet and look at it.

(My mask covers my face up to my forehead...)

I wear the helmet along with my mask and move my head...

(Too small.)

I toss the helmet to the side and try another, bigger one...

(Hmm, much better.)

I then strap the helmet by passing the chinstrap under the mask.

(Thank god I'm tolerant of wearing these things, for all the good they can do, they are uncomfortable as fuck. Or well, the ones from my world where. Then again, these looked much older than the ones here...)

I then look at the rest of the equipment...

(I don't really need anything else, my arm and leg guards are of pretty good quality. Or, you know what? Fuck it.)

I take off and open my bag, then start tossing stuff inside, handcuffs, goggles, arm and leg guards, ammo pouches, belts. All the good stuff...

And once I was done looting the ever-living shit out of that van, I strap my bag on me and exit from the same way I entered. The moment I got out, I saw that the soldiers had already moved two of the cop cars out of the way and had them lined up next to the bridge wall. Two soldiers were now working on moving the third one out of the way, with the other two keeping guard. Well I say they lined them up, but it was more like they just pushed em while turning them slightly, so they wouldn't end up head straight into the wall.

"This is unlocked too." I say as I walk towards them. The soldiers turning to look at me for a couple of seconds.

"Heh, you sure you don't want to join us up? You already seem to have the correct getup. Just slap some camo paint on that baby and you're golden." One of the soldiers snickers as he looks at me.

"And have to constantly follow orders? Sleep five to four hours while spending the rest of my waking time on guard watch or cleaning floors. I don't think so. And there's no way I'm ruining some good ol black clothes by slapping camo paint on them." I respond as I glance around for any corpses with a slight smirk, before looking back at the soldier who spoke up.

"You two, stop talking, move the cars." The second lieutenant commands in an annoyed tone.

(Uhh, as much as I want to cringe. He's right, wasting time here is not good.)

"Let's move this riot van then, with the cars you have already moved. The trucks should be able to pass after we get this out of the way." I point behind me at the van I just exited.

"Somebody get to the wheel, the rest, push the van." The second lieutenant commands again. I nod slightly and turn around. And being closer to the van than the rest, I reached the driver's seat first.

(Not really in the mood to push.)

I glanced at the car's ignition switch as I entered, just to make sure that the keys were not there. A few seconds later, three soldiers walked past the now closed door and towards the back of the van. The second lieutenant stayed back in his spot, looking at the truck. And slowly, the van started to roll.

(Ok, let's see, the road to my right is a slight downhill, as the bridge is a bit taller than the road, soo..)

I turned to the right, the van turning to face the road that led to the trucks and Humvee as it started to pick up speed. I also heard something 'slapping' the back of the truck as it started to roll down the road...

(Next, get it out of the way...)

I casually turn the car to the left. And drive it right into an abandoned sedan. While obviously not having enough force to do any actual damage, I got jerked forward nonetheless.

"Pfft, heheh..." I open the door with a slight chuckle and look around before jumping down. Several corpses dragging their feet towards me, not that I'm surprised. This thing was heavy, so even at low speeds it was able to make quite the audible crash.

"You just had to be loud. Move back to the trucks! We're moving out!" The second lieutenant shouts as he jogs past me, waving his arm to the soldiers behind him.

"I had a giant armored van, smashing it into something was the natural course of action." I say to pretty much myself as I start running towards the Humvee. And the moment I reached it, I opened the front door and entered the car.

"Ok, we should be able to pass the bridge, or at least this part of it." I say as I close the door, then turn to Saya. Only to find her staring at me with her mouth half-open, an 'Oh hell no' expression written on her face.

"What?" I ask as I tilt my head.

"You left for three minutes, and now you have even more stuff covering your damn head..." She answers as she frowns.

"Hey, corpses can't bite through this." I give a light knock on the helmet as I start driving behind the second truck.

"Hum, with how thick-skulled you are, the corpses would probably fail to bite past the bone even without the helmet." Saya huffs as she folds her arms with a slight pout.

"They don't need to bite past bone to infect though, I'd still turn into a shambling corpse if that happened." I respond as I glance at her without turning my head away from the road, driving past the now open barricade. Saya, just looked at me for a couple of seconds.

"Must you take the fun out of everything?" She sighs.

"Uhh, so having a corpse biting my head is 'Fun'?" I ask as I tilt my head.

"I, I didn't say that." Saya stutters as she frowns.

"Huh, Saya kinda sus. I'm thinking of keeping my headgear on from now on in safe zones as well." I answer with a slight chuckle. But, judging from how Saya narrowed her eyes and frowned even more as she leaned towards me. I'd say she was not very amused.

"You're an idiot." An original statement from Saya.

"The nerdiest one apparently." I 'answer' as I chuckle.

Just as Saya opens her mouth to speak again, her stomach grumbled. Causing her to blush and back away.

"Ughh, stupid timing. Eating snacks for breakfast is not breakfast..." She whines as she looks away.

"Hey, I lived on snacks before the outbreak for quite some time, your statement is null." I say as I glance to my left, looking at the river under the bridge that extended for what seemed to be an infinite distance.

"Hum, so you were an idiot before the outbreak too. Eating snacks as 'normal' food is not good for you." Saya folds her arms and turns to me with a rather serious expression.

(Well, if I knew that I would end up 'here' with you and Saeko by my side? I would have focused on taking better care of myself...)

"Hah, got nothing to say back?" Saya smirks as she leans towards me, her arms still folded under her chest as she narrowed her eyes.

"Vinegar potato chips are awesome." I answer bluntly. Saya blinks at me for a couple of seconds, before wincing slightly.

"Eww, how can you like that? They're too sour, they're horrible." Saya backs off and turns her hand into a fist before placing her knuckles on her lips.

"Hey, if you don't like them, that's all the better. You won't steal them, so more for me." I respond with a chuckle. And Saya's stomach, grumbled again.

"Ughh, if I'm getting a response like this just by talking about vinegar chips of all things, I must be really hungry..." Saya places her hand

on her stomach as she lifts her shoulders slightly while she keeps looking away.

"Then get something to eat, it's not like we don't have any food." And just as I say that, we reached the end of the bridge, the trucks slowing down again.

This side of the bridge was a bit more 'populated' compared to the other side. The reason being, it didn't have an actual barricade on this side.

"Huh, they must have been stretched really thin if they really didn't cover both sides of the bridge." I say in a low tone as I keep looking ahead, the trucks slowly starting to move again.

While in the meantime, Saya crawled back to the back seats to get her bag. And after some shuffling, I heard plastic ripping, and then crunching.

(Guess she had something to eat in her bag?)

As we reach the bottom of the bridge, we turn to the right, the trucks in front of me paving a path through the corpses that were strolling about in the middle of the road...

(Next target, the airport.)

"Hey, want some?" Saya asks as she brings her hand next to my face to my right, an energy bar in it.

"No can do, mask." I respond.

"Then take it off you idiot." Saya answers with a slight groan.

"Hah, nice try." I answer back with a chuckle.

"Hum, your loss." She says as she pulls her hand back.

With that, we continued in silence, if you don't count Saya's energy bar 'genocide'. It was also not too long after, when we started to zigzag around roads, as the streets started to get worse by every intersection we passed..

"Hmm, the roads around here look pretty wrecked..." I speak up as I take a left turn while following the front truck.

"A lot of people would have rushed towards the airport when the whole thing started. I'm honestly surprised that the roads are even 'this' drivable." Saya responds.

"I just hope that our dear camo tooting friends know where the heck they're going." I say as I glance at the buildings around us.

(Shops, shops and more shops. We actually stopped being in a 'residential' area the moment we passed that bridge, but the shops around here look like they had been picked clean by a 'setav carry weight 9000' lone survivor. All of em seem empty inside, and whatever glass window or wall existed, is long gone. The roads around ain't looking much better, reason why we keep zig-zagging on almost every intersection...)

And just as we kept driving forward, I heard a 'new' soft moan from the back seats.

(Hmm? One of the sleeping princesses got up?)

I turn to look to my right, only to see a pair of legs stretching from between the back seats, all the way to the front, next to me. The legs leading up to a purple-haired girl that had one arm over her shoulder and to her back. The other stretching towards the roof. She then let out another soft moan with her eyes tightly shut.

(... Focus on the road Naier...)

Without staring for too long at Saeko, I turn to look back towards the street.

"You, would be one horrible lookout." Saya speaks up with a slight huff. Saeko just responded with yet another soft moan, her legs retracting towards the back seats. And after a few seconds, I heard shuffling.

"Horrible, what?" I hear Saeko ask with a sleepy voice.

"Lookout. Guard. Watch." Saya responds with the same huff.

"You and Hitomi slept through literal explosions." She adds as we take what must have been the millionth turn on the road.

"Ex,plosions? Did, something happen?" Saeko asks as her voice quickly loses its sleepy tone.

"No, the soldiers just used some of our dynamites to clear some corpses that were in the way. Nothing happened." Saya responds with a flat tone.

"Oh, I see. How, far have we gotten since I fell asleep?" Saeko asks again.

"Quite far to be honest, we managed to reach the landmass with the..." I stop talking as we take another turn to the right.

"Airport." Saeko adds after me.

"Yea." I continue.

"No, Naier look. Ahead in the distance, that building looks like an airport tower." Saeko leans between the two front seats as she points ahead. And, she was right. Up in the distance, I could see a tower.

"Oh? You're right. I do see a tower in the distance now. We must be closing in to the airport." I say with a slight nod.

"And umm. If you don't mind me asking. What are you wearing?" Saeko then asks. Turning my head to glance to my right, I find her

staring at me.

"The helmet?" I 'ask' as I give it a light tap. Saeko nodded back in response.

"Found it inside a S.A.T. van while clearing a barricade at the bridge." I answer.

"I'm already armored up like a lobster Saeko, should you really be surprised with 'this'?" I 'ask' as I glance at her. Saeko brings her hand to her mouth and lets out a small giggle.

"I guess not. It does seem to be like something that you would wear."
" She responds with a smile. Then moves to the empty front passenger's seat.

"Hitomi's still asleep?" I ask.

"Yea, want me to wake her up?" Saya responds.

"No, let her sleep. Until we reach the base by the airport the soldiers spoke of at least." I answer.

"Wonder how far it is from here." Saeko speaks up next as she stares at the tower in the distance.

"As weird as it sounds, don't think it's far. The trucks in the front seem to be doing a pretty good job of running over small groups of corpses that would otherwise block us. Only real thing hindering us is abandoned cars." I respond.

"Uhh, let me check something." Saya then starts shuffling about in the back seats.

"Check something?" I ask.

"The map." She responds with a flat tone. And after a few minutes of silence...

"Hmm. I see..." Saya speaks up again.

"We should actually reach the airport much faster compared to how much time it took us to get from the house to the mansion. As the landmass we're on now is much 'shorter' compared to the central one." Saya continuous speaking.

"Explains why the tower seems to be this close." I say with a slight nod.

And soon, I saw another 'sign' which showed that we were closing in to a 'populated' area. An increase in corpses, not that the two trucks in front of me seemed to mind. What with them sending everything flying to the left and right.

"Naier. I have been wondering, what are you going to do after we get there?" Saeko then speaks up, causing me to glance at her.

"Don't really know yet. Probably act according to circumstances." I respond.

"Huh, like?" Saya asks from behind my seat.

"Well, for example. If they have already taken the airport back and are extracting people. I will check if we can get extracted to the same location that the third elementary school got sent to. Or check whether they know that a bunch of crazy mercenaries are blasting holes in their safe zones. Maybe I will see if I get us a better spot as payment for well, helping these guys. So, as I said, act according to circumstances." I answer as I tilt my head.

"I see..." Saya responds nonchalantly.

With that, we then kept going straight for two intersections, before the first truck took a turn to the left. And as the second truck and I followed suit, we found ourselves coming to an abrupt halt.

"Huh, why did we stop?" Saya asks as she pops between the two front seats.

"This." I respond as I point ahead...

A tall blue metal fence was up ahead, the top of it having a catwalk for a person to walk on, along with two giant searchlights on that catwalk. In the center, a giant hole. A metal fence that should have been where the hole is was a little further in on the ground. And, a crapton of dead corpses inside, as in, Dead dead. Piles of them, most of them smoking like they have been burned.

Deeper inside, I could see another fence like the one that was near us, except this one looked closed, and more importantly.

"There are people on the catwalk in the distance. I think..." I say as I focus my sight towards the second fence in the distance...

"I see them too." Saeko responds.

"Are they..." Before Saya could finish, one of the trucks flashes its headlights, and seconds later, one of the searchlights on the distant fence flickers on and off.

"Normal people." I say with a small nod.

"That gate is too small for the truck to pass." I add as I tilt my head, only to see one of the soldiers jumping out of the truck and running to the nearby gate, undoing the locks and folding the remaining part of the gate, allowing the two trucks to pass.

After both trucks drove though, the soldier came up to me and motioned me to stop. He then climbed on the Humvee, his legs hanging by the window that Saya was next to.

"With all these corpses chilling on the floor, I'm not surprised he does not walk to walk his way to the second fence." I turn to look through

Saya's window at the soldier who was now sitting on our roof, Saya herself staring at her window as well...

And the moment the trucks reached the second fence, two soldiers from the other side of the fence quickly opened it up, and motioned us to move inside.

"Well, holy shiet, the place is actually not overrun..." I say in a low tone as we slowly went through the second fence.

The bridge that connected to the airport was to my right, a metal fence like the one we just passed through a little deeper into the bridge itself. Ahead of me, after a wide road that seemed to be a highway, was a giant building. But most importantly, in front of it was a giant yard, that was plainly put, overcrowded. Military cars driving about, disappearing behind the giant building through the narrow roads that it had on each side, soldiers running in formation, tents with people in civilian clothes. Overall, a lot of things, a lot of 'noisy' things. Which explains why to my left, where the highway extended, was one giant metal fence that extended from one side of the road to the other, in total being about double in size compared to the one we just used. On our side of the fence, four soldiers with flamethrowers, on the other. A corpse barbeque party.

(Hmm, nice thinking, corpses are rather flammable if we go by how they turned into torches in that crashed bus when we fled the school. Light up one in a horde that has clogged together, the rest will follow.)

Just as we got close to the front yard, the truck stopped. The soldier then jumped off my car, and after giving the hood a quick slap, he turned to me and made a thumbs-up motion.

"Well, we made it. 'Civilization'. Yiepe ke fucking yey." I say with a half-joking manner as I point with my full hand at what I think was a drill instructor that was overlooking a bunch of exercising soldiers. ut hey, at least he was not shouting how useless they are...

Then, the soldiers from 'my' team got out of their trucks and quickly gathered up in formation next to the first truck...

"Hmm? That was fast, they have a general here or smithi..." I stopped mid-sentence as I noticed the people they saluted. One, sure enough, looked like a high ranking official, a clean ironed suit with several badges, no helmet or beret on his head. And trust me, in the army, you don't take off these things unless you're eating or are outside in civilian clothes. Or are too high in rank to be affected by rules. But ohhh no, that was not what made me stop talking. That, was because of the person standing next to him...

And, I just kept staring at that person. Until the soldiers, with a final salute, turned to leave with a quick pace...

"Saya..." I spoke up again as I kept looking at the man.

"What?" Saya asks nonchalantly...

"Does your father know any high ranking officials?" I ask again.

"Huh, what are you talking about?" She asks as she leans between the two front seats.

"Well, he seems pretty comfortable standing next to that guy, he even makes the poor general look like a dwarf in comparison to him..." I respond as I point at the tall, imposing figure that was standing next to the general.

Saya looks at me, her eyes going slightly wide before she pushes her glasses with her fingers, quickly turning to look through the windshield...

"P... PAPA?!" She then shouts, nearly bursting my eardrum.

I didn't even realize how fast she opened her door, jumping outside and making a full sprint towards the tall man. Who indeed was, Souichiro.

"PAPA!" I hear Saya shout once again as I exit the car, Souichiro also having turned to look at the shouting piknette by now. And, holy crap, this must be the first time I've actually seen the guy being wide-eyed.

With the door still open, I climb up to the Humvee's roof, sitting by the corner and resting one leg on the open door.

"Well, that certainly was a pleasant turn of events amongst the shit we've been pulling. " I say with a slight smile as I looked at Saya, who was now pretty much stuck on her dad, who had his hand on her head. And as Saeko exited the car from her door and came over to my side.

"This is indeed a nice turn of events." She spoke up as she leaned her back on the doorframe to my left.

"In more ways than one." I add with a nod.

"We might be able to have a better bargaining position if Saya's parents are on our side, and they have a connection with the high ranks." I add up.

"Ohh, scheming something already?" Saeko asks as she turns to look at me with a slight smirk and an arched eyebrow.

"Me? Scheming? What makes you think I would ever do such a thing?" I answer with a chuckle as I tilt my head.

"Hmm? Just a hunch." Saeko responds as her smirk turns into a one-sided smile.

"Actually, would you do me a favor and wake up Hitomi?" I ask as I turn to look at Saeko. She responds with a nod before turning to open the back door and crawling inside...

After Saeko disappeared into the car, I let out a sigh and closed my eyes. Then stretched out for a few seconds...

"Ohh? That's one nice car you got there commando." And, I heard a new voice speak up as I stretched.

Opening my eyes, I spot a woman looking at the Humvee. Purple hair, tanned body, eyes a light shade of red. Wearing black combat overalls that she had left unbuttoned on the chest region, a white shirt underneath. One hand next to her face, a cigar between its fingers. Yea, it was pretty obvious who this woman was...

(Well shiet. Rika Minami in the flesh. Do the surprises ever stop?)

I tracked her eyes, to see that she was looking at the Humvee's license plate, before she looked back at me.

(She was looking at the license plate, she knows this is her car.)

"Yea, can't count how many times this little monster saved me and my group." I respond as I tap the car lightly with my hand.

"Hah, I can imagine. You must be glad you made that purchase now eh?" She responds as she takes a puff from her cigarette.

(Purchase? Do I look that old? Then again. She can't see my face to make out my age. And as a foreigner, I am relatively 'larger' than the common Japanese man. Though, I would suspect my Japanese pronunciation must be as good as a drunk Uk man speaking American English.)

"Ahh, no purchase. The car's not mine." I respond as I tilt my head. Causing Rika to arch an eyebrow as her lips curved to a very slight one-sided smirk.

"Ohh? And who does it belong to?" She asks as she places her cigarette on her lips.

"I don't know to be honest. A friend of a friend." I answer.

"From one of the two that are inside the car?" Rika asks as she glances through the windshield.

"No, she's not with our group anymore." As I answer, I see Rika's smile slowly disappear.

(Oh shit, wrong wording.)

"She and the other half of my group got already extracted. Third elementary school, a couple of days ago. They were the ones that informed us of the next extraction point. That, turned out to be a dud, so we ended up here instead." I continued speaking, Rika stayed quiet.

"She is, or was the nurse in my school. Kind of an airhead for her age to be honest. But she got us to the house where she and her friend stayed, that's where we found this car and the guns we used for some time..." I add as I bring my hand to the back of my neck.

"Heh, to put it plainly. We owe her and her friend, one giant fucking favor. Pardon my french." I add up as I keep looking at Rika.

"I've heard worse." Rika answers as she stares at me with a rather intense stare.

"Marikawa." She then speaks up, her stare still fixated on me.

(Oh? She's testing me?)

"Uhh, Shizuka?" I respond as I tilt my head slightly. And Rika's expression instantly turned a lot more 'mellow' after hearing my answer. Giving me a slight nod. afterward.

"I hope we're not interrupting anything." A new voice speaks up. Turning my head to it, I see Saya's mother, who walked up to us along with the big scary dad and pinkette herself.

"Mister and miss Takagi, good to see that you're all still well." I respond as I turn to them.

"And no, not really. Just speaking with the person who we pretty much owe our lives to." I continue speaking, Saya arching her

eyebrow as she glances at Rika, then looking back at me, frowning slightly as she narrows her eyes.

(Oh, oh. Tsundere alert.)

"I'll take it that, from that little 'Test' you just put me through. You are Shizuka's mystery friend?" I 'ask' as I turn to Rika, Saya blinking at me like a fish before looking back at Rika herself.

"Rika Minami. Pleased to meet you, commando." She responds with a smile as she brings her free hand to her forehead for a very lax salute.

"Naier Sepfier." I respond with a slight nod. Rika looks at me for a couple of seconds, then brings her index finger to her lips, tapping it a couple of times.

"Ninja penguin." Rika blurts out...

(... Really? Really now?...)

I just, stared. Rika on the other hand laughed through her nose and closed her eyes before looking back at me.

"When I spoke with Shizuka on the phone before the E.M.P.. She seemed to have trouble pronouncing one certain Naier, Sepfairy. She must have told me your name so many times that I ended up memorizing it. Plus in the end, she told me that your name is Ninja penguin instead." Rika adds with a slight chuckle...

"That's. Honestly a very Shizuka thing to do to..." I respond as I let out a slight sigh.

"Hey you! You have to move with the rest of the civilians!" One of the soldiers from this 'installation' shouts as he walks up to us.

"It's alright, the people in this car are part of my group, I will deal with them." Souichiro pretty much commands as he turns to the soldier, who just nodded a couple of times and turned to quickly leave.

"After all, I'd like to know why you seem to be, missing a couple of people since the last time we spoke." Souichiro then turns his 'stare glare' to me...

(Oh boy...)

New destination reached

"And that's how we ended up here..." I glance out of the window to my left as I keep speaking.

Outside, several floors below, was the backside of the building. Same one that had the giant yard in the front. The reason I didn't see any of Saya's Dad men wandering around, was because he was given the 'backside' of the building. That as a side note, also had electricity, guess they had generators somewhere? The backside now consisted of another big yard surrounded by roads, each intersection blocked with the same type of fence in order to create a square shape of 'living' space. Other than the survivors he dragged around, that were now in the front part of the building in the tents I saw earlier, the backside had most of the equipment they brought from the mansion. Along with several makeshift installations. Now, speaking of Saya's dad...

"..." He was just staring at me with his arms folded, sitting on the opposite side of the table...

Yuriko was next to him, Saeko and Saya sitting by my side of the table. Rika was obviously not here. Other than the fact that we took her car and guns, she barely knew us. And Hitomi, was also not here. As after waking up and getting pale-faced the moment she saw Souichiro staring at her, she decided to 'go' with the other civilians...

"Naier." Souichiro speaks up after what must have been an eternity of silence.

"Thought I told you to protect my daughter." He says flatly.

(Uhh, I could not think of anything to say as to 'why' the girls are here with me without making it obvious that they missed their chance to get extracted because of me. So, I told the truth.)

"You did, but I can't shave her bald and shove her in a room to protect her." I answer, causing Saya to turn to me with a stupefied expression.

"So you instead let her recklessly plummet into a river while being inside a car." He responds with the same flat tone.

"Papa he didn't..."

"I am speaking with Sepfier now. Do not interrupt." Souichiro cuts off Saya before she could even finish her sentence. She responded by turning her hands into fists while keeping them under the table. Glancing away as she narrowed her eyes, but keeping her mouth otherwise closed.

(Oh boy, the guy might be actually pissed right now. So, change of plans, being passive now ain't going to help me.)

"It was that, or leaving her with the rest of the group." I lean forward as I place my hands on the table.

"And they still had a relative distance to go till the extraction point. An extraction that we were not even sure if it was still there. I didn't trust them with keeping her safe." I add up as I lean back on the chair.

"Takashi, for all the good leader that he is. He mostly reacted, rather than acted. He didn't plan ahead. Instead, he solved problems as they came up to him. And that can lead to walking into a problem that can 'not' be solved." I say as I fold my arms.

(I am actually talking out of my ass here. I got no idea how Takashi 'led' because I honestly did not pay too much attention to him.)

"And you're different?" Souichiro asks.

"In the estate. I was the only one that 'did' something, rather than wandering around like a lost kid. Not my words." I glanced at Yuriko as I spoke.

"Yes, I do remember saying that." Yuriko nods as she speaks up. Shouchiro just keeps staring at me silently.

"And, I don't mean for when the E.M.P's fell. That, was reacting. What I mean was before the E.M.P.. Takashi spent his time strolling around with Rei instead of thinking of what we need to do to prepare for our next step, even after he agreed that we will split from your group he just twiddled his thumbs. That could have ended up with us leaving with no supplies at all." I lower my head and turn slightly to my left, where Saeko was sitting.

"Let's take the fuel for example. Maybe he did not know that Humvee's have horrible fuel efficiency. He didn't bother to look it up, it would end with us running out of fuel. Where? I don't know, maybe next to a gas station, maybe next to a horde. That then leads to him reacting to the problem that will be created. A problem that no matter the solution, will not have a better outcome compared to actually just having fuel from the get-go." I keep speaking as I raise my head again.

"What if the extraction was a ruse to attract unwary survivors? While it's highly unlikely, it's a possibility. I don't really know Takashi, so I can't really say if he would just waltz in without looking. And as you said, you told me to protect your daughter. So leaving her with a 'might be fine' is not good enough for me. So yes, I figured letting her come with me was the safer option." I add as I keep looking at Souichiro.

"Then, tell me of a plan to take back the airport. If you are good at planning." Shouchiro 'finally' speaks up. Though what he said, caused even his wife to glance at him.

(Uhh? What? Are you for real? What does that have to do with anything? Ughh. Fuck it, Let's see...)

"What resources do we have?" I ask back.

"Two jeeps, one truck, a handful of men." He answers.

(So, umm. I always sucked at RTS games, but whatever....)

"If we can use absolutely nothing more. Before you enter the airport, somebody with binoculars will scout the airport, see where they keep the jet fuel and where most corpses are congregated at. If they have fuel barrels, take the truck and one jeep, with all the people but one in the truck, so they can quickly get the barrels inside the truck. Then, place the barrels in the middle of the airfield and punch holes in them, keep one barrel in the truck. After that, jam the jeep horn and leave it by the barrels. While you are leaving, make a trail of fuel with the last barrel. Once enough corpses have gathered up, light it up. We lose one jeep, but just in case the barrels don't explode, the jeep will. The sound will get what corpses were too far to go right into the fire and burn themselves to a crisp." I tilt my head as I stop talking...

"If it has a truck instead of barrels, same deal. We just, don't lose the jeep." I add.

"What if we don't want to lose the jet fuel." Souichiro answers.

"Then drive around the truck with a few men holding flamethrowers in the back. And light the corpses up as they gather behind the truck. Corpses are flammable, the army seems to realize it too. If they gather into a horde, they will just lightly themselves up. If the higher-ups want the fuel, then they can at least give up a couple of flamethrowers." I responded.

"What about the building itself?" He asks right after.

"Most airports have a lot of giant glass walls, shoot them till they break. Then gather all cars in one spot and make as much noise as possible. With the windows broken, most corpses that are not stuck will follow the noise and either fall to their death, or end up in the field, once there, shoot them or burn them. After that, move forty five degrees on the side of the building, from north to either west or east for example, and repeat the process four times. Until you come full circle. Then, one team with heavy armor and, or some sort of shield

will enter from one side and clear out the inside room by room. Armor or shield would be preferred because they might end up with corpses next to them in tight corners or behind closed doors." I answer...

(Why are we doing this again? Oh right, because Saya came with me into the river...)

After a few minutes of silence...

"I've heard worse." Souichiro speaks up.

(Why, thank you very much. If you can do better, then be my friggin guest.)

"I'm not supposed to be a better planner than a seasoned military official. Just better than Takashi." I responded with a flat tone.

"I know exactly what and why I'm asking you." Souichiro 'answers' as he slowly gets off his chair.

"I need to make sure that you're capable of taking care of my daughter." He adds up. Then walks towards the door behind me.

(By taking over an airport command and conquer style?)

"We are still considered to be a family of certain influence. We do have certain 'expectations' out of the man that our daughter seems to be so keen on following around." Saya's mother speaks up with a smile as Souichiro leaves the room.

"I can follow whoever I want to..." Saya responds with a low tone whine as she folds her arms, lowering her head and glancing away from her mother. Yuriko responds with a small chuckle as she looks at her daughter.

"Sorry for taking part of your time, we have prepared rooms for each one of you. Third floor before the top floor, there is also a bathroom there with hot water. I take it that with the electricity out, you had to

resort to cold water so far." Yuriko adds as she leaves three keys on the table...

"Not really, Naier can be rather resourceful. Even on meager tasks like having hot water." Saeko responds with a slight smile.

"Meager till somebody catches a cold, and ends up sneezing next to a horde." I say as I take the three keys. Yuriko just giggles slightly as she gets up.

"I won't take any more of your time then." She adds as she also starts walking towards the door. Only to stop and turn around.

"Oh, and, about your car..."

"The keys stay with me. Except if Rika wants her car back, can't do much about that." I cut her off. She nods, then leaves the room. And, uhh. We just stayed there, for a couple of minutes, silent...

(... Well, that was weird. But hey, still got all my parts attached.)

"Soo, let's go? " I ask as I get up and glance at the girls, both of them nod and also get up.

With that, we also exited the room and turned to head to the first flight of stairs to our left. Then, headed up, towards our designated floor...

"You know, they say top floors in tall buildings shake like crazy during an earthquake." I say nonchalantly as I keep walking up the stairs.

"If we get an earthquake while we are up there now, I'm seriously going to kick you out the damn window." Saya responds from behind me.

"Hey don't shoot the messenger, I'm just stating the facts." I answer with a slight chuckle.

"You said it, so now you jinxed it." Saya responds with a slight huff.

"Hmm, maybe I should ask that you get a room on the lower floors then, just in case." I answer as I glance back at her.

"Idiot." She responds as she narrows her eyes with a pout.

Upon reaching the target floor, we find it relatively empty, compared to the lower floors at least, it also looked 'nicer' compared to the other floors. It could be, because it was cleaner? Because it was probably not used as much? Something, did definitely feel different.

After we looked around the floor for some time, we finally 'found' our rooms, all three next to each other. I say found, but it was mostly that they were the last three rooms we had to check. The rest were either locked and the keys did not fit, or were already unlocked. With the keys again, not fitting.

"Here we are." I look at the keys before looking at the doors. And by now, I also realized why this place felt different.

"Weird how this floor reminds me of a hotel, while the rest of the building looks like an office building." I add as I give each girl a key.

"It's near the airport, maybe they had the top floors reserved for guests or customers that had to stay longer. Or maybe it was used by the higher-ups of the company. As the doors don't seem to have any sign to show what key goes where." Saya shrugs slightly as she takes the key.

"I didn't see a bathroom anywhere though." Saeko adds as she also takes her key.

"Maybe the rooms have their own bathrooms." I say as I walk up to the door in front of me and try the key. Only to come back with a negative result.

(Of course...)

"Not mine." I say as I go to the left room and try the key again. This time, the key actually unlocked the door.

"Mine." I nod slightly as I turn to the girls.

"Well, you know where to find me if you need me for something." I add as I keep looking at them.

"I will keep that in mind." Saeko responds with a slight smile as she stares at me...

(Maybe, I should lock my door...)

And, the moment I walked inside my room, I scanned my surroundings...

(Well, shiet. Saya nailed it in the head on the 'higher-ups room')

Other than having the airport in full view on the giant, tinted window pane ahead of me. A double-sized bed with a small stand to my left, a lamp and an ashtray on that stand. On the wall opposite the bed, and to my right, a giant Tv. Next to the Tv, towards the deeper part of the room, a door. Next to that door, a desk that was placed in the corner between the wall and the glass 'window' wall. A laptop with its lid open on the desk. Sadly, the screen looked as dead as ever.

(I take it this is the bathroom?)

I walk up to the only door in the room and open it. The bathroom coming into full view.

(Hmm, nothing too crazy. But, I'm filling that tub, because fuck it. I want to chill in the tub. Question is, do I have clothes to change into?...)

I let out a sigh as I realize that I don't have my bag and will have to walk all the way to the bottom floor and get to the car in order to get my clothes...

I exit my room and lock it. Then go to the next door and knock on it.

"Yiaa!? Close the door you pervert!" I hear a girly shout from inside...

"The door ain't open?" I respond as I tilt my head. Only for several seconds later to see the door handle move, the door staying closed.

"Ohh, oh. You're right, it's locked..." The voice replies. Increasing my urge to facepalm...

"I didn't get my clothes, need anything from the car Saya?" I ask as I place my hand on the Scar-H that was hanging by my side.

"H, how did you know it was me! Does your room have a one-way mirror?!" The voice responds...

(No, it's because Saeko would casually open the door while being half-naked. Also, your voices are different. Also, Saeko would not go all 'Yiaa' from a door knock. And, seriously? One way mirror? Come on Saya...)

"Uhh, no? You and Saeko have a different voice tone. And you can check my room if you want. Hell, we can change rooms if you don't believe me." I respond as I fold my arms.

"No, it's. Ok..." Saya replies.

"So, need anything from the car?" I ask again.

"No, I got my stuff in my bag..." Saya replies with a much calmer tone.

"Alright." I nod and head towards the third door. And the moment I knock on it, the door opens. Saeko almost instantly walking outside in her normal attire.

"I do need some stuff from the car, mind if I come with you?" Saeko asks as she smiles, tilting her head slightly. I just shrug and motion her to come along.

(Somebody's been eavesdropping huh? Sneaky Saeko is sneaky.)

Yet, before we even managed to take a step, Saya exits her room, also in her normal clothes, minus the white jacket...

"I, I forgot that I forgot something in the car, I'm coming as well." She flatly declares as she closes her door behind her.

"What did you forget?" I ask as I arch an eyebrow.

"S,something! Now move your butt!" Saya responds as she places her hands on her hips before leaning towards me with a pout.

(... My, if I didn't know you any better, I'd say that you're actually coming because of Saeko. Maybe you actually like her more than me. Heh...)

I hold myself back from chuckling and start walking towards the stairs.

"By the way, Naier." As we started walking down the stairs, Saeko spoke up.

"Hm? What's up?" I ask as I keep walking.

"When are we going to spar again?" Saeko asks in a casual tone...

(... Oh, hell, nope.)

"Uhh, when having broken bones ain't going to be a risk to my survival..." I respond with a deadpan tone.

"As inside a safe zone for example?" She asks again.

(Not denying that you're going to break my bones huh?...)

"When I won't have corpses staring at me from the other side of where I'm standing. For example..." I answer. Saeko just responded with a soft 'hm'.

"What's the problem, afraid you'll get your ass kicked again?" Saya asks with a grin as she turns to me.

"Yes." I answer with the most deadpan voice I can muster.

"Chicken." Saya adds with a huff as she keeps staring at me with that shit-eating grin.

"Not wanting to end up in a hospital makes me a chicken? Huh, you must really like guys like Tsunoda then." I answer, causing Saya's face to instantly turn sour.

"Ew, no. How can you even link what I just said to that flip flop wearing tard." She says with a frown, tilting her upper body away from me.

"No sense of self-preservation? He would pick any fight that came his way." I answer with a slight shrug.

"That's completely different." Saya responds as she folds her arms.

"Nope." I add right after her.

"Yep." She adds back.

And just as we finished that 'exchange', we reached the bottom floor.

"Besides..." I turn to look at the girls as I take a silent deep breath.

"Cuddling over breaking my bones any day." I add with a slight shrug. Both Saeko and Saya taking a heavy blush in the next couple of seconds.

"Y, you're not supposed to say crap like that out loud you idiot!" Saya starts glancing around us before tightly folding her arms under her chest.

Saeko just turned to look away with her head slightly lowered, the middle phalanx of her index finger covering her lips...

(Well, this scene is cuteness overload so I'm not complaining. But are they really 'this' embarrassed over the word cuddle? Especially since one certain purple-haired samurai does not seem to mind walking around me half-naked...)

And speaking of that Samurai...

"I, do not want you to despise the time you spend with me. So I do not mind, trading our promised spar, for something that we will both enjoy." Saeko speaks up as she turns to look at me...

"We 'promised' to spar?" I 'ask' as I tilt my head.

"Yes." Saeko replies almost instantly.

"After our first spar, at Saya's house." She adds.

"Why I don't remem..."

"You hit your head pretty hard back then, it probably slipped your mind." Saeko cuts me off...

(... Five bucks say that she was actually thinking about 'this', instead of actually being embarrassed...)

"W, we have stuff to do. Stop wasting time." Saya, with a groan, quickly walked up to me and turned me around, then started pushing me forward by pushing my back...

"Why so embarrassed?" I ask as I start walking towards the exit, Saya still 'pushing' me.

"S,shut up." She hissed with a low tone.

(She's not denying it.)

After we got out of the building, and Saya finally stopped 'pushing' me. We headed to our parked Humvee...

And, the moment we got near our car. I realized that a person was sitting on the hood...

"Hmm? Is that Hitomi?" I ask as I tilt my head.

"Think so." Saeko adds right after me.

"Of course she would not just leave..." Saya mumbles as she folds her arms.

Once we got near, Hitomi spotted us, lifting her arm and waving at us before sliding off the car's hood.

"Something wrong?" I ask as we get near. Hitomi shook her head.

"No, I. I wanted to thank you. I left without saying anything back there because it seemed that the matters you were talking about were personal." Hitomi responds, then makes a slight bow.

(Really? Because it looked to me that Souichiro just rolled a +20 crit 'terrify' on you.)

"Don't, we made a trade, remember?" I answer as I fold my arms.

"Oh.." Hitomi lifts her upper body and glances at me before starting to awkwardly glance around...

(Ughh, now she's making me feel bad.)

"But you're welcome anyway." I add after a few seconds.

We then spent a few awkward minutes standing there...

(Well, let's do what we...)

"Huh? Well I'll be damned, it 'is' you!" Before I could even finish my thought, I heard a new voice speak up. Turning to it, I see a guy covered in grease walking up to us, white tank top, overalls that he wore like normal pants, and his hair tied to a bun behind his head...

(Uhhh, that's. The guy that managed the armory from Saya's house?...)

The guy wipes his hands with a cloth he pulled out of his back pocket, then stops next to us.

(Didn't he do that the first time we met him as well? De-javu.)

"You're the armory guy from Saya's house." I say as I tilt my head slightly.

"The name's Igano." The guy responds.

"Kabamaru?" I 'ask' as I hold back a chuckle, the guy just arks an eyebrow questionably.

"Tanaka." He responds flatly.

(These guys don't have Kabamaru? Damn, I feel really bad for them now. Still, do they even have anime shows here? And, would that make anime on TV be a counterpart of live-action movies from my world? I, got so many questions right now...)

"Do you know anybody by that name?" Saeko asks after a few seconds of silence.

"Huh, not really." I shake my head as I glance at her.

"Still, I didn't realize people from Saya's 'group' could spot us from a distance." I add, causing Igano to chuckle.

"You are walking around with the boss's daughter my friend, you're sticking out like a shore thumb." He adds as he folds his arms, glancing at the pinkette who responded by also folding her arms and frowning at the man.

"And well, there's the part where I had to give part of my armory to a bunch of, hey, is that the Scar-H I gave you?" Igano, like an

overhyped teenager, cuts his own sentence in two the moment he spots the gun that was hanging on my side.

"Uhh, yea. You know, not many of em are floating around." I respond as I tap the assault rifle.

"Want an upgrade?" He adds with a slight smirk as he lifts an eyebrow...

"Elaborate." I almost instantly answer. Causing the guy to laugh through his nose.

"After we arrived here, Souchiro traded some of our working jeeps for supplies from the army guys that were already stationed here. You would not believe the stuff we have right now." Igano points behind him as he keeps speaking. I just stayed silent as the guy spoke, and seeing as I didn't respond...

"Working high powered scopes, silencers, under-barrel grenade launchers..."

"Ok, I'm sold let's go." I cut him off as I walk up to him...

"H,hey! Where are you going! We're supposed to take a bath, our stuff's in the car!" Saya shouts. Causing Igano to glance at me, then at the girls.

"You guys are taking a bath together? Holy crap..." He adds with pure surprise in his voice. Causing Saya to change several shades of red, probably a mixture of embarrassment and 'Saya anger'.

"That's not what I meant you guntaku!" She shouts back.

"Guntaku?..." Igano tilts his head with a now confused expression.

"Right, here. Get some clothes for me as well, if possible."" I say as I toss the keys to Saeko. Who nods at me.

"Ughh, Kohta mark-two." Saya groans as she turns to look at the car.

(Hey, if you are saying I remind you of your canon love interest, I'll take that as a compliment.)

"If I'm not back shortly, go on without me." I ignore the frowning pinkette as I point behind me.

"Very well." Saeko nods at me once again before walking up to the car's door, unlocking it with the keys I just gave her.

With that, me and Igano turn to head towards the center of the backyard...

"Guntaku..." Igano whispers in a low tone.

"I deal with more than just guns..." He adds with a dejected tone.

(That's what bothers you? Dude...)

After a couple of minutes, we stopped in front of a makeshift installation. That, well...

"This place is minuscule compared to the old warehouse, how did they fit everything in here?" I ask.

"We didn't, a lot of stuff is still inside the trucks. This is just a temporary stop after all, it's not the main base of operations." He adds as we enter the 'building'.

"Aiming to retake the airport eh?" I 'ask', the guy just nods.

(Damn the insides are a mess, tables are sprawled all over the place, store shelves all around the place with gun parts and maintenance equipment. Several people are also already inside, working on some of the tables. And, the ground is dirt, literally.)

"Alrighty, let me see that Scar." Igano turns to me and extends his arm. I nod and give him the gun. And after checking it for a couple of minutes...

"Ok, we can add a nice scope on this as it already has a rail, we also have compatible silencers. Don't have the scar-type nade launcher though. Not that it would matter, these things are like printers. Get the machine for free, pay an arm and a leg for the consumables. We don't exactly have a lot of launcher grenades to spare." He adds as he nods.

"Working scope and silencer sound good enough." I respond as I fold my arms.

"Alright, I'ma need some..."

"Ah! There you are." A female voice exclaimed, and seconds later, an arm warped around Igano's neck.

(Rika, has joined the party. Would like to rename Rika?)

"Please tell me you're finished." She adds as she turns to look at me.

"Hmm? Ohh, you're here too. My lucky day." She says with a smile.

(Huh?)

"Yea, your PSG-1 is set. Added a scope with night vision just as you asked." Igano responds.

"Ahh, nice. Thank you very much." She responds as she brings her hand on his head, giving him a few head pats. Igano lets out a dry cough as he moves slightly away from Rika.

"Also, I don't know what you did, but the high suits are looking for you." Rika casually turns to me as she puts one hand in her pocket, pulling out a cigarette.

"They are?" I ask back.

"Yea, didn't tell me why, but they sent me to find you. So, hope you don't have a date planned, because it just got canceled." She adds with a slight chuckle.

(Never gonna get a break am I?)

"Uhh, great. Care to lead the way? I go no idea where I need to go."
I respond as I fold my arms, Rika nods and turns towards the exit, waving her arm at me to follow her.

"I'll drop by later for the gun. Take your time." I say as I turn to Igano, who still had my gun. He nods and walks deeper into the 'room'.
After that, I exit the structure with Rika.

"Ah, before we go. Got to let my group know about this." I tap my mask as I turn to Rika.

"Humm? Don't want to make your girlfriends worry?" She adds with a rather sly smirk.

(... Is she spying on me?)

"Uhh, last time I did go off on my own I ended up with almost broken bones. After I returned." I responded. Rika just nodded with a chuckle.

"Where to then, commando?" She asked.

"Your car." I answer with a deadpan tone.

(... Why, do I have this uneasy feeling...)

Seeing that I wasn't gone for too long, the girls were still there. Saya was inside the car, having the back door open while fiddling with the bags. Saeko was outside, talking with Hitomi.

"Hoi." I lift my hand as I close in to the car, causing both Saeko and Hitomi to turn to me.

"Oh, you are done already?" Saeko asks, then shifts her sight to Rika, who stopped right next to me...

"Hey, do you know where Naier leaves his stuff? I can't find them."
Just then, Saya poked her head out of the open back door.

She stared at the two girls, who did not respond. Before turning her sight to where they were looking at, aka me. Or, well, Rika...

Saya blinked a couple of times, then narrowed her eyes as she turned to glare at me with a frown, her face taking a slight shade of pink.

(I get the feeling they don't like Rika around me. But they didn't mind Hitomi? Then again, Rika is a bit more, uhhh. 'Developed'. In more ways than one...)

"Apparently Saya's dad and the commander, or whatever he is. Are looking for me. I'm letting you know, since last time you gnawed at me for not saying a thing." I speak up, trying to ignore the obvious stares...

"Where are they?" Saeko asks flatly.

"Top floor of the main building, ask any uniform in there and they will tell you the way." Rika responds.

"I will meet you there then, I need to get some things from my room first." Saeko answers before she turns to walk towards the main building...

"Do I need to put a damn leash on you?" Saya 'asks' as she exits the car, locking it in the process, Then turns to also follow Saeko. Leaving me, Rika, and Hitomi...

"Well, uhh take care Hitomi. If for some reason, I end up flying through a top-story window, you can have your sword back..." I say as I glance around, then turn to also head towards the main building. Hitomi staying by the car without really saying anything, looking as confused as ever...

"Hmm, your purple-haired friend is one scary gal." Rika puts her finger on her lips as she glances at me with her eyebrows slightly raised.

"Felt like she wanted to cut me into fun-sized bits just from the way she was staring." She adds as she brings the hand that was on her lips to her neck, scratching it lightly.

"She did?" I ask as I glance at her.

"Yep. Trust me, it's the silent ones that are the most dangerous, I could feel her killing me just from the way she was looking at me." She answers as she turns to look at me while folding her arms.

(Uhh, not 'very' far apart from what she would be actually 'capable' of doing. Just add that she might end up sexually harassing you while she's chopping you to bits. Uhh, what the fuck am I thinking about?)

With that done, we entered the building, and headed toward the top floor via the stairs. And, midway of climbing them stairs...

"You mean to tell me the higher ups are constantly climbing 'this' many stairs?" I ask as I glance at Rika, who was to my left.

"Of course not, the elevator is working." Rika answers flatly.

"Then why are we..."

"Executive personnel only." She cuts me off.

"Of course..." I groan as I shake my head.

"Don't tell me you're tired. I'd expect more stamina from the guy that's traveling with two pretty girls, in a car full of condoms." She adds, with one hell of a smirk...

"Uhh, the who what now?" I 'ask' as I dart my head to her. She responds by pulling a pair of keys from her pocket, dangling them near her face.

"I always have two sets of keys, car included. Figured I'd get the packet of cigarettes I left in my car. But, ohh boy. Cigarettes, I did not find." She says as she starts chuckling.

"If I'll tell you that they were not used for their 'normal' purpose, will you believe me?" I ask as I bring my hand to the back of my neck.

"Ahh? And what 'did' you use them for then?" She 'asks', slight sarcasm in her voice.

"Gun barrel protection from rain and dirt." I respond flatly...

"Hmm, that, is actually quite smart." She answers as she tilts her head slightly.

(Thank you Kohta.)

"So, you were left alone with the two girls that got all grumpy just from the fact that 'I' was standing next to you. And you did 'absolutely' nothing?" She asks as she arks an eyebrow, a wide grin on her face.

"Yes." I answer flatly.

"Of couuurse." She responds as she turns to look through the window to her left with a chuckle. If she was not sarcastic before, she was now.

"Don't worry, your secret's safe with me." She adds as she turns to look at me with that same grin..

(... But, I got no secret...)

"Still, how did you even manage that?" She asks after a few seconds. I just turn to her and tilt my head questionably.

"These two seem like total firecrackers. I'd expect they would try to eat each other out instead of playing nice. And not the fun type of 'eat'." She adds with a slightly arched eyebrow.

(... Judging from Shizuka's 'island dream'. I'm getting the hunch that you for one, know very well, how to eat somebody the 'fun' way... Aaand I'm thinking of weird crap again. God, I swear, Rika's rubbing off on me the wrong way...)

"Ehh, you know. Somehow?" I respond as I raise both shoulders. Rika just responded with a 'hummm' as she narrowed her eyes at me with a grin...

(Don't you 'hummm' me dammit. I really did nothing.)

And so, with a steady pace, and Rika grinning at me. We reached the top floor.

"Finally..." I groan as I go over the last step.

"Hey, what are you doing here?" And a fully decked soldier walks up to us almost instantly.

"The higher ups asked from him." Rika answers casually.

"I see, go take a seat then, they're in the middle of a conference right now. Nobody goes in." The soldier points behind him, towards a couch placed back to back with a giant window pane.

(... And that's, rich and high standing people in a nutshell. They don't give a fuck whether they are being a nuisance to other people, drag me here to wait, while they're doing other crap. I understand they're probably working overtime to set some order, but jeez.)

And so, I take a seat. Then turn to look at the window behind me, the bridge that led to the airport in full view...

(Wonder if the planes are still functional...)

...

..

-Somewhere in the Ark island. Err, I mean hentai island. Uhh, you get the point... -

"Who's a good girl! Whoos a good girl! Whhooss a uud url!" The big gray wolf responded to the retraded baby talk by rolling about on the ground, her tail pretty much a blur from how fast it was waving.

"Hmm? Wait, who's talking? Ohh, shiet..."

Hey, there. Uhh, you're probably wondering what's with the 'deadpool' section right about now. Well, you know that we reached 2nd place in followers some days ago? Yea, that's some weird crap right there, considering that I started this because I got weirdly overhyped by rewatching Hotd, and decided to write a small chapter amidst the hype to get better on my spelling amongst other stuff. Saying I expected it to last this long? Is one big understatement.

Anyway, that's not the reason I'm here. Those of you that saw the summary probably realized I was doing something 'extra' on deviant art during the last week. Well, it's finally done. Take it as a 'present' for reaching second place. Sadly, considering the time I wasted on it, the outcome 'is' rather lackluster. But not touching a pencil for three years can do that I suppose. So, without any further delay. If you're interested in looking it up, and as this place hates links with a passion, look up - **deviantart sereo66** - the thing is called **Saeko, Saya, Naier** . Very 'original', I know.

Now, where was I? Oh, right. Who's a guud grill?!"

"Bark!"

Afterburner

(You know. I don't know whether I should be surprised, or sigh at how comical this is...)

It has been a few minutes since we entered the 'conference' room. We as in Rika, Saya, Saeko, and me.

On the opposite side of us, sitting by a set of tables that created an 'arc' that extended to about half the room, three people. Saya's dad to my right, the from the burning mansion to my left, and the 'lot's o medals General that was responsible for this establishment in the center.

(... Uhh, I know I should not judge a book by its cover. But the General in the center, he looks like a fat guy straight out of an NTR game. Ughh, come on Naier, don't badmouth the guy. He might not be so b...)

"Is this some sort of joke? 'These' are the people that 'helped' you? It's just a bunch of kids." The 'lot's o medals' General scoffs.

(... Aaand he's an ass.)

The moment the General finished his sentence, I reflexively glanced to my left to find Saya glaring at the man, her eyebrow twitching slightly.

(Right, Saya really 'likes' being called a kid. And he just had to use 'these' words...)

"Did we get called here just so somebody can voice his displeasure?" I 'ask'. The General narrowing his eyes with an obviously displeased look.

"I have two people here in relatively high standing, telling me that 'you' provided some valuable assistance. Yet, all I see is an

insubordinate boy and two highschool girls." The General responds as he keeps staring at me.

"Sir, we're in the middle of a very important operation. I would not have mentioned them if I didn't think they were up to the task." The M. General calmly speaks up as he turns to look at the grumpy ol General.

"I'm not one to mince my words General. That 'boy', as you called him, is the reason we managed to leave my estate, instead of having to flee from it." Souichiro adds with a stern look.

(I should be happy that these two are backing me up right now. But, task? I REALLY don't like the sound of that.)

The General lets out an exaggerated sigh before folding his arms.

"I will give you two options. One, you will go with the infiltration team into the airport. Two, you will hand over all of your equipment to us." The General states.

(Like hell I'm giving you my stuff you fat ass.)

"When are we leaving?" I 'ask'. Trying to hide the sarcastic tone that I really wanted to take.

"... 'You' are leaving in ten minutes. I was only informed about you, not your. 'Friends'." He responds as he turns to look at Saeko, then Saya. Not even trying to hide 'where' he was staring at...

(Danm, he even acts like an NTR class old man. What's next? He will 'take care' of the girls while I'm gone?)

I was also rather surprised that the girls did not speak back, though they both didn't look too 'chirpy' right now.

"Fine, but they keep their equipment as well." I respond.

"You are not in a bartering position here kid." The General leans back on his chair.

"I'm not bartering. Nobody is touching my, or their equipment." I respond as I also fold my arms.

"I don't think you..."

"General, need I remind you that these people are under my command? I agreed to help with your operation. But I'm to decide whether their equipment gets taken or not" Souichiro finally speaks up. And uhh, the fact that he passed the General for about two heads in height, made it look like he was staring down at him now...

(Wait, we're what?)

"You never mentioned you had a military-grade Humvee mister Takagi." The General retorts as he turns to look 'up' towards Souichiro's face.

"Oh, that would actually be private property Mister General. My, private property." Rika brings her hand to her temple for a salute as she speaks up.

"You cops don't even know how to present yourselves correctly?" The General turns to stare at Rika now.

(Damn this guy is insatiable, and he's staring at somebody's boobs again...)

"My apologies General, but I'm no soldier." Rika responds as she makes a slight bow. Though, I could see her pursing her lips, as if not to chuckle.

"Ughh, just get going. We wasted enough time on this." The General makes an annoyed eye roll before making a 'shoo' motion with his hand...

(Good fucking riddance.)

We turned around and left the room, then walked down the hallway until we reached the couch we waited on before.

"UUUUGHHHH. That old fart!" Saya stomps her foot on the ground before plopping on said couch, folding her arms with one hell of a frown.

"Easy there, he might hear you and label you a spy, then demand to do a 'personal' pat-down on you." Rika responded with a slight giggle while folding her arms under her chest. Both Saeko and Saya turning to stare at the tanned woman...

"What? Don't tell me I was the only one who noticed 'where' he was constantly staring at." Rika adds as she 'pushes' her chest up with her folded arms.

"How did that guy end up in such a powerful spot anyway?" I ask as I glance towards the airport, half trying to change the subject. I was pissed enough at that ass as it is, didn't need more reasons to want to pass a blade through his spine.

"Right spot at the right time." Rika answers flatly.

"Well he's a creepo and I don't want him anywhere near me." Saya adds with a frown.

"While he is certainly not among the people I would rather spend time with. That is not what actually bothers me right now." Saeko speaks up next, then turns to lock her eyes on me.

"You do realize that he is just trying to lower his own casualties by sending you there instead." She adds up.

"If he believes what Saya's dad and the M. General told him about me? Possible, but there ain't much we can do about it. Shorty fatty here is the head honcho. Picking a fight with him, will go south for us pretty fast. From taking our equipment, to being moved to stay with

the rest of the civilians." I respond as I shake my head, then turn to look at Saya.

"And it would also leave your dad 'exposed'. Your dad might have tried to take the pressure off us by saying that we are under 'his' command. But that means that our fuck ups can be used against him now." I point behind me with my thumb as I speak.

"I know. But that doesn't explain why 'we' can't come as well..." Saya answers with a slightly grumpy voice, her arms still folded under her chest.

(Uhh, right, I know they will hate my answer. But, here goes nothing)

"Because neither of you is ready for this." I respond, causing both Saeko and Saya to blankly stare at me.

"Care to, elaborate on that? I believe that I am more than capable of defending myself." Saeko 'asks' as she folds her arms, slightly narrowing her eyes.

"Yes, at close range. But all the soldiers will be using guns. You will end up in their line of fire if you try to close in to a corpse. And, neither of you know how to use a gun efficiently yet. Because I get the feeling that guns, will be the only thing we'll use." I respond as I glance between the girls...

Saeko, turns to look away in response to my answer. Saya just stared at me with a 'glare pout' while still sitting on the couch.

"Don't worry, I'll make sure to return him in one piece." Rika then speaks up, placing her hand on my shoulder. And getting a bit, too close to me in the process.

"Naier can handle himself, he won't need 'protection'." Saeko responds as she turns to give a cold stare at Rika.

"Y, yea he can manage just fine by himself!" Saya exclaimed as she jumped off from the couch, grabbing me by my hand and 'pulling' me away from Rika...

And seconds later, Rika started chuckling.

"Sorry, sorry. But your reactions make you a bit 'too fun' not to tease." Rika responds as takes a step away from me, a smile still on her face.

(Really not the right time for this Rika...)

Saya then lets go of my arm and turns to look towards the airport through the window with a 'Hum', folding her arms once again.

"Still, I wonder who's fault it is, that I still can't use a gun." Saeko then asks, giving me an obvious stare. While she did not 'sound' sarcastic, I think it was obvious that she was...

"Saeko, even if I did show you how to use a gun. You'd still not be nearly as ready for this." I respond as I tilt my head.

"So we're not ready, but you are..." Saya whines as she keeps looking towards the airport.

"I was able to match headshot count with Kohta, the guy who probably has lead for blood. So yea, I think I'm at least average." I say as I turn to Saya, who did not respond. She just kept looking towards the airport.

And then, nothing. Saya just kept staring through the window, Saeko silently sat on the couch while looking at the window ahead of her. And me with Rika stood in the center of the hallway...

(We, really need to go. But...)

"Uhh, look. I really don't want to leave with the atmosphere being like this. I'll have enough on my hands as it is. Don't need my mind

constantly reminding me that you're now pissed at me." I lift both arms slightly as I glance at Saya, then at Saeko...

"But you're an oh so awesome shot, I'm sure you'll manage the extra baggage just fine." Saya responds with what I could only call sarcasm in her voice...

(... Really? Really now? I knew they would not like this. But, holy hell. Isn't this a bit, too much? They do realize that I 'can' die over there, right?)

I let out a sigh as I lowered my head, shaking it lightly.

"Really? I really don't know what you hope to gain by making me feel like shit. But, if that's your aim, then good job, I guess. Maybe going into a fight while wanting to blow something up 'is' better than going in serene." I turn to my left and start walking towards the stairs.

"I need to head to my room to get the rest of my stuff." I say as I keep walking, not waiting for a response.

(I hope we 'will' blow this fucking airport up. Because I really want to light something up on fire right now.)

After reaching the floor with my room, I make my way straight to it.

"Don't need the bag, take the sword." I say to myself as I enter the room.

"Also ask Igano for magazines." I add as I grab my sword, then check my handgun to make sure it was still in its place.

With that, I turn to leave the room. And as I was about to walk through the door, the sword's hilt got caught on the door. Causing me to come to an abrupt stop...

"For Fuck's sake!" I take a quick step back and yank the hilt off the door, then throw a strong stomp on said door. An audible 'crack'

sounding off as a vertical rip appeared to where my boot just landed...

After pulling my leg back. I, kept looking at the crack on the door for a few seconds, before leaning on the door frame behind me...

"God, ffffaaa..." I let out an audible sigh as I close my eyes and drop my shoulder slightly.

(Come on you fuckin lunatic, get your shit together. No such thing as human relationships without a headbutt or two...)

I take a few deep breaths and knock my mask a few times.

(Keep it together, don't do anything retarded out there. You don't want to end up dead, do you? The girls might be acting coldly towards you right now, but I don't think they would rejoice if they found out that you blew yourself up out there. Or, I hope they won't...)

"Umm, Naier?" With my eyes still closed, I hear a female voice speaking up next to me. Opening my eyes, I find Saeko next to me, staring at me. I give the door one last glance before turning towards the purple-haired girl, also spotting Saya a few meters behind her and to the left, looking pouty.

Saeko, without saying a thing, undoes her belt. Taking her sword off and extending it towards me.

"My sword, is of better quality and better maintained than yours. I want you to take it, until you return..." She says as she keeps looking at the sword in her hand, keeping her head slightly lowered. And while Saeko was speaking, I noticed Saya as she blankly blinked at Saeko. Before she started patting herself down, pulling her Lugger a few seconds later.

(You know, just saying 'sorry' would be more than enough for me. But uhh, ok, ok. Think, think...)

I glance at both girls without moving my head...

(Neither of them seem to want to look at me in the eye. Maybe they think that I'm the one who's pissed at them now? Uhh, let's make sure that that, ain't the case.)

I take off my sword and leave it by the inside wall of my room. Then bring my hand on Saeko's sheathed katana...

Yet, before she could let go of her blade. I slid my hand onto hers, grabbing it and pulling her towards me. Ending up with her 'landing' on my chest.

"You know, I'd rather we don't 'fight'..." I whisper as I wrap my hands around her waist. Saeko stood still for a couple of seconds, before she started nuzzling her forehead on my chest. Which, I reckon must not feel 'very' nice, as I'm wearing the bulletproof vest right now. She then lifts her head to look at me.

"It, is just. I know how reckless you can be. And letting you go alone, it makes me feel uneasy. It scares me." She responds as she lowers her head again.

"Hey, I told you once before. I'll tell you again. For as long as you need me, I will be around." I bring my hand to her head and ruffle her hair lightly.

"A, are you two going to take forever?..." I hear a whiny voice speak up after a couple of seconds. In response, Saeko backs away from me and folds her arms under her chest, all the time keeping her blushing face slightly lowered...

I then take a few steps out of my room as I fix the Saeko's sword on my belt, and by the time I lifted my head. Saya was in front of me.

"I, I want it back. So you better not lose it..." She says as she pretty much shoves the Lugger to me along with its holster.

(Saya type apology, 10 outta 10)

"Sorry..." She whispers as I take the gun.

(Ehh?...)

"I didn't mean to say that to you. I, was just angry at the whole situation and lashed out at you. Sorry..." She says as she lowers her head.

(Ehhhhhhh? Saya is actually apologizing? Holy crabs.)

"As long as you understand. I take what you tell me seriously." I respond as I take off my jacket, then wear the luger over the vest before wearing the jacket back on again. Then, I spend a few seconds adjusting everything on me...

"Don't I get a hug? I said I'm sorry..." I hear Saya whisper with a whiny voice as she keeps looking at her feet, slightly pressing the tip of her shoe with her other shoe...

(... When did Saya learn how to be this fockin cute?...)

"C'mere" I hold myself back from chuckling as I spread my arms slightly. Saya takes a few steps before 'bumping' on me...

And, after a few pinkette head pats.

"It's not that I don't like this, but I really should get going." I say as I keep running my hand on Saya's head.

"Saeko was allowed to hug you for longer..." She whines without letting go of me.

"But I was not the one who made him feel like 'shit'." Saeko responds after hearing her name.

"S,shut up. I said I was sorry..." Saya replies as she presses her face against my vest...

(Talk about mood swings. But, well, I'd rather have this. Instead of thinking that they're mad at me...)

"They better leave us alone after this..." Saya speaks up as she finally let's go of me.

"It's all that perverted creepo's fault, sending you to do somebody else's work. This would not have happened if it wasn't for him..." She adds up as she takes a few steps back, folding her arms.

"Ahh, speaking of perverted creepo. Do lock your doors..." I chuckle as I fix my clothes.

"You think he would go as far as to try and barge into our rooms?" Saeko asks as she looks at me, blinking a couple of times.

"If he's as drunk in power as he seems to be? And with the way he was staring? Add a few extra locks, for good measure. " I add as I glance behind me.

"Ughh, please stop. I'm going to have nightmares if I keep thinking about his ugly face." Saya winces as she shakes her head.

"Yea, ehh, good idea. In any case. I should go get my rifle from Igano. " I nod before turning around.

(I have no idea if I'm late but, blahh. Whatever.)

I head to the stairs, and after giving the two girls one last glance, I start going down...

After reaching the bottom floor, I head outside. Heading straight to where Igano should be at, aka the central installation...

Upon making my way, and entering the makeshift installation, I scan the room. Until I spotted the bun tooting, not so ninja Igano.

"Hey, tell me you're done and I won't have to go to the airport with a bunch of peashooters." I speak up as I close in towards the man, his

back turned to me.

"Ahh? Oh, it's you. So Rika was not joking? Damn, guess being 'too' good 'can' bite you in the ass after all. And no, Rika came some time ago and took your gun. She's waiting for you by the gate that leads to the airport, the one on the bridge in the front part of the building." Igano replies as he turns to look at me..

(First name basis with Rika eh? Well, not all that surprising, he was working on her gun after all.)

"I see, also. Got a few magazines I could use? I got only one." I nod slightly before folding my arms.

"What happened to the ones I gave you? You lost em?" Igano asks back with a confused expression.

"You never gave me any extras for me to lose?" I respond with an even more confused expression.

Igano responds with an 'oh'. And after staring at me with a black stare, he tells me to wait before turning to go deeper into the building. He then asked a man that was working on a Type 89 something, and the man responded by pointing towards a shelf. Igano nodded and trotted to the shelf. After shuffling around for a few seconds, he took something off of it and ran back to me.

"Three magazines fully loaded. Just like the doctor ordered." He says as he gives me the mags with a smirk.

"Thanks man." I nod as I take the mags and put them in the free pockets on the vest, then turn around.

"Try not to get yourself killed ya hear." Igano gives me a few strong pats on the back as he speaks.

"Don't worry, not among the things I'm aiming to do." I respond as I start walking, waving my hand without turning around.

(Ok, front of the building now.)

I nod and start a light jog towards the front...

(Too good huh? Maybe I should 'spectacularly' fuck this one up.)

I chuckle to myself as I keep running. And after passing by the side of the building, I arrive at the front. Almost instantly spotting a jeep and the truck parked by the bridge's entrance...

(... a Half truck, and a jeep? Huh, what a 'coincidence'...)

I decided to hold my thoughts on what I was looking at, and headed straight towards the two vehicles. As I got closer, I spotted one tanned, purple-haired woman with a PSG1 and a Scar-H. Along with five? No, six more men, all near the back door of the truck.

"I'm not late am I?" I ask as I close in, causing the group to turn towards me.

"Not really. We're still waiting for the driver. He ate a bad taco." Rika responds as she tosses me the Scar-H. I catch the gun, then glance at the rest of the 'team'...

(Huh, two soldiers? The rest are wearing uniforms from Soiuchiro's group. So three from Saya's dad, two army men, one cop. And one penguin. Dream team alright.)

"Ahh, you're the one who helped us back there. Never managed to thank you." One of the two soldiers walks up to me, the second one following behind him.

(Uhh. Other than the fact that the first one is taller, they looked like a carbon copy of each other. That's the army for you. Zero individuality.)

"Back there? You two are from the burning mansion?" I ask, both of them nod in response.

"Wait, so no actual soldiers from 'this' establishment have been assigned?" I ask as I fold my arms..

"Well, there's me, and the driver." Rika speaks up.

"True." I nod slightly before wearing the Scar-H.

"So, uhh, we have a plan? Or we have been ordered to clear a possible triple-digit 'infestation' with just sticks and stones?" I ask again.

"We have a plan. We will take the truck and one jeep, fill the truck with fuel barrels and place them on the runway. Then use the jeep to attract these freaks before blowing them all up to kingdom come." One of Souichiro's men, who wore a red armband, answers...

(... For real? Really now? Where are my creds? I want an eighty present, plus interest...)

"Might not sound like much, but at least we 'have' a plan now. Initially, they were just aiming to toss half the armed forces into the airport to clear it out." Another one of Shouchiro's men speaks up. That one, was wearing glasses.

"You didn't hear this from me. But that General in charge here? A real strategic mind that one" The last one of Souichiro's men adds with a sarcastic tone. He looked, rather generic to be honest.

"How did that guy end up 'up' there anyway?" I shake my head as I fold my arms.

"Highest rank. Other high ranks are either M.I.A or K.I.A." The tall soldier responds.

"That's, not what I meant. How did that guy become a General in the first place..." I turn to look at the soldier who answered.

"Oh. Well, uhh. You know, the same way other incompetent people get positions of power?" The same soldier responds in a lower tone,

reflexively glancing around the moment he said the word 'incompetent'.

"Matters not. We have a plan, let's do our jobs and get this over with. Taking back the airport is vital, as we don't have a place to land the evacuation planes right now. " The armband guy responds.

"Hmm? Hey Naier, ain't this the sword your purple-haired friend was carrying around? What, made up already?" Rika 'asks' as she grins at me.

"Yes." I answer flatly.

"Haah. Good to see that they decided to listen to me." She responds with a chuckle.

"Uhh, what?" I ask as I tilt my head. And just as I finish my question, another soldier runs up to us.

"Sorry for the delay, that damn taco." He says as he fixes his pants.

"Just don't get near me please." The generic-looking guy from Shouchiro's group says as he laughs through his nose.

"Yea fuck you too. Let's go." The Taco soldier responds as he gives the laughing soldier the finger. Making a beeline for the truck's driver seat.

"Ok, I will be driving the jeep, the rest, get into the truck's box" The armband wearing man glances at the other two men from his group as he also starts walking towards the jeep.

(Ok, so. We got, Armband dude, Glasses dude, Generic dude, tall dude, short dude, Rika, and taco man. Ten outta ten naming skills.)

With that, the rest of us enter the back of the truck. With me sitting next to the 'exit'.

"Careful not to fall off, we're leaving the doors open" Rika adds as she sits on the opposite side of me. I nod back in response...

"Hmm? Oh dude look, two hot chicks are staring at us." The generic dude says as he nudges glasses dude, who was next to him, with his elbow.

(... Uhh, something tells me that...)

Hearing the generic dude, I turned to scan around the front part of the building and its adjacent road. And true enough, one twin tailed pinkette, and one purple-haired samurai were staring towards the truck.

I raise my hand towards them, they respond by also raising their own hands.

"Wait, you know them?" The glasses man asks as he looks between me and them.

"Yea." I answer.

"Know them? He was traveling in a car full of condoms with them." Rika adds, her face seemingly looking like she was trying to hold her breath.

(... Oh, hell no.)

"Wait. One of them is the boss's daughter..." The generic dude adds as he squints his eyes, while at the same time, the truck started to move, going past the now open fence.

(Oh, double hell no.)

"Wait, really?" The glasses guy leans towards the truck's back exit as he also squints his eyes...

"Uhh, can't make them out now. Still, if the boss's daughter was waving at you..." Glasses guy stops speaking as he turns to me.

"Then you must be that nutjob who plugged the barricade at the estate when the E.M.P went off." He adds as he pushes his glasses closer to his eyes.

"Nutjob?" I 'ask' as I turn to look at the guy.

"In a good way of course." He responds as he goes back to a normal posture while smiling at me.

(How the hell can somebody be a 'good' nutjob?...)

"Plus the fact that you're 'nuts' enough to go after Souichiro's daughter. All the pretty in the world wouldn't be enough if I had 'him' waiting for me on the other side." The generic dude chuckles.

"Hah, wait until dad over there finds out that our guy here is going for doub..."

"Dubstep" I cut off Rika before she could finish. Locking my eyes on her. She just responded with a playful chuckle.

(Didn't you say that my 'secret' is safe with you, ya damn liar.)

"Uhh, you lost me there." The glasses dude frowns slightly as he looks between me and Rika.

"I was going to be, a dubstep Dj..." I respond with a deadpan voice...

(Really now me? Dubstep Dj? I barely even listen to friggin dubstep. Just, thank God that we got no electricity to spare, they can't ask me to prove it...)

"Heh, then maybe that's why you're getting sent here. Souichiro is trying to kill you, to get his daughter away from you." The generic dude chuckles. I respond by letting out a short dry laugh before turning to look through the open back doors. The fence that we went through, which was already closed shut, quickly losing its size. And, I

could now see a couple of corpses that were roaming about between us and the fence.

"Can't see a single car on the bridge." I say as I keep looking outside.

"Yea, they kept the bridge empty and in order, up until the E.M.P's fell. And as cars didn't work after the panic started, nobody could actually use the ones inside the airport to leave, or crash them on the bridge." Rika responds as she also turns to look outside...

After that, we stayed quiet for some time, only the sound of the engine echoing as the truck kept moving forward...

"You know, I wonder how they'll decide to deal with all this." The short soldier speaks up.

"Bomb the whole city?" I 'ask' with a chuckle.

"If it was just this city? I would not rule it out. But all of Japan is a hot zone. They'll have to bomb the whole damn continent if so." The tall soldier answers.

"From the info we have been given, they are aiming to use the small islands around Japan as outposts. And building on the ones that allow it. Then start taking back the mainland by taking over small strategic points. Like overrun bases, communication centers, fuel depots." The tall soldier adds up.

(Hmm, then 'our' island could fit the bill, the underwater tunnel could also work both ways too. If we clear it, it'll be a 'cheaper' path that leads to the mainland, compared to ships or planes. Still, something else bothers me right now. The four mercenaries, they lit a whole camp on fire, Meaning they got hired by somebody, and that 'somebody' does not give fuck if they burn one of the few safe camps to the ground. And, the mole they mentioned. As I said, it could still be something that has nothing to do with the outbreak. Like owing money to the wrong people...)

"We're actually in a much better position than countries that are surrounded by land. Poor sods there got nowhere to run to." Generic dude adds.

"Yea, and I heard America got hit pretty hard too. Which is rather weird, seeing as a lot of people there have loaded guns in their houses..." The tall soldier continues.

"You think it's weird? I mean, think about it, how many of these people would start shooting each other the moment they disagreed on something. Or hinder evacuation progress because they'd think that the army is trying to box them in. Having a gun makes escalating something trivial to a dangerous degree really easy. Now give guns to everybody, all it takes is one itchy trigger finger. And suddenly, everybody's shooting each other." Rika turns to look at the tall soldier as she speaks.

"Uhh, I guess, you could be right." The tall one responds as he sways his head from left to right.

"We're closing in towards the end of the bridge, get ready, making a beeline to the fuel storage, over." The radio in Rika's chest pocket goes live.

"Ok, you heard the man. Get ready." Rika glances around the truck as she speaks.

"I just remembered, I forgot to eat..." I respond nonchalantly as I keep looking outside, the bridge getting replaced by a wide field, the airport. And seconds later, I feel somebody poking me. Turning my head, I find glasses dude with a pack of biscuits extended towards me.

"Don't say I never did anything for you." He adds with a chuckle as I take the packet.

"I'll make sure to plug another barricade in your name. Thanks." I responded as I took the opened package, glasses dude just

chuckled some more before leaning back on his seat.

I take off my helmet, then lift my mask along with balaclava, and pick the topmost biscuit...

(And once again, I'm eating junk food for a main meal...)

"Ok, I got to ask." Rika then speaks up.

"What's with the mask? I sort of expected you to be missing a nose, or having half of your face burned. Obviously not the case from what I can see now..." She adds up as she keeps eyeing my face.

(So while you thought that I looked like a malformed Golum, you also thought I was boning Saya and Saeko at the same time? What the hell 'did' go through your head Rika? Actually, I don't want to know. Because the points for a fucked up hentai are all there, and I like my sanity...)

"I wear it because I like it. Simple as that." I respond as I take a bite.

"Ehh? Real shame then, you're actually pretty decent to look at." She adds as she smirks slightly.

"Uhh, thanks?" I say as I arch an eyebrow.

(And now I'm feeling uneasy whether Saya or Saeko somehow heard that...)

"Dude, if you're going to steal all the hot chicks from around here. Then please go disappear." The short soldier groans.

"Ohh? You think I'm hot?" Rika 'asks' as she turns now to stare towards the short guy.

"Uhh, umm, well, I guess, yea..." The shorty stumbles on his words from the sudden question as he glances around.

"We're next to the depot. Look alive people, we got hostile bodies roaming around! Over!" The radio suddenly shouts.

Rika's face quickly turns serious as she nods slightly, placing the PSG-1's butt against the floor, so that the barrel was near her face. She then takes a silencer out of her pocket and attaches it to the gun.

"I will keep them off us while we get the barrels. Keep your eyes open on the sides, I won't have a full view from inside the truck." She adds with a serious expression as she readies her gun.

"I'll get out and watch the sides. Got a silencer on the gun as well." I add after her, grabbing the Scar-h that was on my side and lifting it slightly.

"Huh, why didn't we get silencers and scopes?" The generic dude asks as he gets off his seat, kneeling down on the floor in the middle as he readies his own Type 89.

"Hah, because we're expendable drones?" The tall soldier responds as he does the same.

And then, the truck suddenly stopped, and started moving in reverse, making a full u-turn while driving backwards.

"There! I see the barrels by the wall ahead of us!" Glasses guy shouts as he points ahead.

"Keep going, I'll tell you when to stop. Over." Rika presses the talk button on her radio as she keeps staring through the open door.

"Roger." The driver responds...

"You didn't say over, over." Rika says in a joking manner on the radio.

"Oh shadap." The radio responds.

"Ooooveeer?." Rika adds as she smirks...

"You might want to hold on on something." I add right after as I keep looking outside...

The reason? Without the driver being able to see the road, we were going straight towards a couple of lone corpses. Corpses that, as I suspected, the driver did not try to strafe over.

(Holy crap this thing shakes like crazy when going over bodies, feels like it's going to frigging flip.)

"Ok, stop!" Rika shouted to the radio as we got closer to the wall with the barrels.

(Red and blue, we got two sets of barrels. And corpses, a lot of em. At least, most of em are still far, but there are a couple on top of the barrels, literally.)

"Red barrels right?" The tall soldier asks.

"Yea." Rika responds as she looks through the scope.

"Red is gasoline, blue is kerosene. Latter one won't burn as good, plus, we need it for the planes." She adds as she pulls the trigger, taking out one of the corpses that were standing on the barrels, making it land face-first on the floor behind it, a rather big blood splatter appearing on the white wall..

"Ok red is good! Go, go!" The short soldier shouts as he pats the tall one on the helmet.

With me being next to the exit, I jumped down before the rest, then quickly took a few steps ahead before turning around, and kneeling down.

"The hell are you doing?!" Glasses guys shouts as he also jumps down.

"We run over corpses. Don't need em popping under the truck." I respond as I look through the scope while scanning under the truck. And sure enough, I found one corpse that was crawling towards us from under the truck.

"Found ya you little shit.." I add as I pull the trigger, then lift my head and glance around me.

(Holy shit, all I can see is corpses to our left and corpses to our right, we'll get surrounded if we take too long. At least the barrels are by a wall, so we're only 'half a circle' fucked...)

As I finish that thought, Rika fires another shot, taking another corpse that was near the barrels down.

"I'll stay by the truck! Let's make a line to the barrels. If you want to shoot stuff, then keep the deadies the sniper can't see off us!" Glasses dude throws a few slaps on my helmet as he shouts. Meanwhile Rika took another shot as the last of the guys got out of the truck.

"We're going to get surrounded like this!" The generic dude shouts as he points towards the opening to our right.

"We'll have the jeep draw away some of them when we're done. Now quick shouting like a bunch of squealing schoolgirls. You are being louder than my damn gun." Rika responds as she fires another shot.

(Don't laugh, don't laugh...)

I let out a suppressed chuckle through my nose. Thankfully, seeing as everybody was a bit 'busy', they didn't realize that I was laughing from the fact that Rika just burned them.

(Ok Rika, has the corpses by the barrels, I'll keep the ones that are around us from closing in too much.)

I nod and get up. Then take a few steps towards the right side of the truck. Until I had a clear view of the corpse-filled field ahead of me.

(Time to waste my bullets.)

I look through the scope and scan for the nearest corpse. The winner? Some corpse woman in her middle fifties, and judging from her clothes, or the ones that she still had on her. She must have liked dressing like a, twenty-year-old...

(Cougar alert?)

One pull of the trigger, and with a satisfying 'muffled' sound coming off from the silencer, the corpse got sent flying back, hitting the ground with her face facing the sky. And it stayed there, motionless.

(Huh, didn't expect the gun to be 'this' silent. More weird world shenanigans?)

The second one, was what I suspected to be a worker here. The orange hard hat, illuminated vest and ear mufflers he still had on him made him stand out over the rest of the corpses. A bit, too much to be honest. There were probably a couple of corpses ahead of him. But, he just stood out, way too much.

(It'd be really retarded if the Scar-H can't punch through a hard hat. Even if it lands on a funky angle.)

Another shot, and the worker corpse falls backwards, the helmet still attached to its head.

(Ohh, he must have fastened that bad boy pretty good, it didn't fly off.)

I then turn to look towards my left. The soldiers and Souichiro's men had already created a line, rolling the barrels to the truck. The two men nearest to the truck then pushed the barrels up, and finally Rika pushed the barrels deeper into the truck with her foot.

With the gun still aimed, I walk past the 'line', towards the left side of the truck. Shooting three corpses that were a bit too close to the truck's side. Then, look towards the field.

(Bah, looks as bad as the right side...)

"Last one, we won't fit in if we add more." Rika speaks up as she kneels near the exit of the truck's box.

"Don't worry, you can sit on me if you want." Glasses guy says with a chuckle as he and the tall soldier push the last barrel up.

"Pull off a stunt that will wow me here, and I'll think about it." Rika responds with a slight smirk as she helps him get on the truck.

"Ok, call our back up, we're done. Over" Rika adds as she presses the talk button on her radio.

"Got it. Over." The radio responds.

(What a Rika thing to say.)

And one by one, everybody got back up inside the truck's box. With me staying out last as I was already on 'shooting' duty.

"Alright we're all in! Stop bullying the dead guys and come on!" Rika shouts at me.

I nod and let my gun drop to my sides before turning around, making a sprint to the back of the truck. The moment I got near, I grabbed Rika's hand and climbed back up.

"Everybody's set, drive like that Taco is chasing you!" Rika shouts to the radio the moment I got back up, a small smirk on her lips.

"Fuck you too sweetheart. Also, you didn't say over." The radio responds in an annoyed tone.

"Hah. What a comeback~" Rika answers, smirk still on her face.

The truck then starts picking up speed. Only to come to a quick stop seconds later.

(Of course it would not be this easy. Guess the road 'is' blocked)

I lean out slightly to see the field around us.

(And everything is still coming towards us...)

"Why did we stop?!" The short soldier slams the wall that was behind the driver with the butt of his gun.

"I can't drive through a wall of fucking flesh! Tell your boyfriends to pipe it down! We have to wait until the jeep draws some of them away! Over." The radio shouts back...

And then. Silence. We just sat there, corpses slowly closing the distance between us and them...

A minute passed, then two minutes. And nothing, no sound of any 'jeep'.

(This is taking too long...)

"Man, I am NOT dying here!" The short soldier shouts as he clutches his gun, glancing outside at the corpses that were now a few meters away...

"Hey, calm down, we can't do much anyway. Running out there now will get you swarmed. And they can't climb, we should be safe here." The generic dude responds.

"Nobody is dying, pull your shit together." The tall soldier adds with a calm voice.

"I AM calm!" The short one shouts.

(As calm as a psycho, on a brand new shiny meat bicycle.)

And just as the Shorty was losing his shit, and the corpses were getting a bit 'too' close for comfort. A car horn echoed.

"About damn time." Glasses guy speaks up with a slight sigh.

And it couldn't be any better timing, as the moment the truck started to move, a corpse grabbed on the bottom rail of the truck. And it obviously, did not let go, as it ended up getting dragged along with us.

"Sorry, but you kind of smell. Find another ride." Rika lifts her rifle, then brings the gun's butt flat on the corpse's face. The corpse, just kept groaning, not showing any sign of letting go...

"Ughh. Come on, I hate clingy guys." She groans as she pulls her handgun, then fires a single shot, punching a hole right through the corpse's head, causing it to let go and tumble on the road behind us.

"Ok, so. What's next?" I ask as Rika holsters her handgun.

"Now we go to the middle of the field and put the barrels, punch holes in them and leave 'em there, we will keep one barrel to make a fuel line. Then park the jeep next to the barrels, pick the driver, and bail." The generic dude responds...

(... Shouchiro, I better be getting some damn credit for this.)

And so. The jeep, with the horn still howling, started 'pied piper-ing' the corpses. For the lack of a better term, creating a sizable horde behind it...

Using the opening that was created, we stopped the truck in an open location. And started to unload the barrels. Well, I say we, but me and Rika stayed inside to keep guard, taking potshots at the corpses that strayed a bit too close to the rest...

(Uhh. I know that Rika is supposed to be a top shot, but hot damn she's good. No wonder she said to her partner that he can fondle her

chest if he beats her. Fat chance that even Kohta can beat her. Yea, she's that good.)

"You know, you're a pretty decent shot." Rika spoke up after we had dropped a couple of corpses.

"A bit too slow to be honest" I responded.

"Even still, I see that your shots do land. That makes you pretty decent." She said back.

"Nowhere near our actual gun nut though, or you for that matter." I pull the empty clip out and change to a fresh one from my vest as I spoke.

"Want me to show you a couple of, 'tips'?" Rika ends her sentence by turning her head to me while leaning it slightly towards me, a smirk on her face.

"Are these tips going to make two certain girls I know chain me and toss me into a trunk?" I 'ask' as I turn to look at Rika.

"My, where's your mind wondering? Could it be that two ain't enough for you?" Rika 'asks' back with a sly smirk.

"I have enough trouble managing two. While also having my mind constantly remind me that I would probably be salty as fuck if it was the other way around. So no, two is more than enough. I also don't need to have 'somebody' that will be trying to chop my head off. And, I also don't want to see that 'somebody' bawling her eyes out because of me." I respond with a serious tone.

"Good answer." Her smirk changes to a smile as she turns to look back through the scope, taking a shot shortly after.

"Hahh? Good answer? What? Don't tell me that you've been testing me by poking me in places you shouldn't." I 'ask' as I also aim down the scope.

"Humm, don't get me wrong. It's not like I'm against a 'steamy fun night'." She responds as she keeps looking through her scope.

"But that reaction these two had when they realized you had to go. I get that feeling that for them, it's not just about, 'fun'." She narrows her eyes as she keeps looking through her scope, pulling the trigger once again.

"To put it plainly, I wanted to find out if you're an asshole. A pretty hardcore one if you somehow managed to lead on these two at the same time, but an asshole nonetheless." She adds as she turns to look at me.

(Damn, that woman is sneaky snek. But...)

"Heh, I shouldn't be surprised that you're doing this, should I? I mean, if Shizuka is as much of an airhead as she seems to be. 'Somebody' must be good at 'looking out' for her." I glance at her with a chuckle, then turn to look back through the scope, picking the corpse nearest to our group. And giving it a red flag, right through the head.

"Ehhh, so you're saying that it's my fault that she's that much of an airhead? It never crossed your mind that she is actually 'playing' the airhead? Combined that with her killer body, it makes guys literally drool over her." She responds as she arcs an eyebrow, then turns to look outside through her scope.

"You're just pulling my leg now. With the slight exception, that even she does not seem to understand. She's always like that. Always. Or what, her technique is so advanced that she can seduce inanimate objects? Because I have seen her acting like that even when nobody is around her." I ask as I glance at Rika.

By now, the others had set the barrels, had punched holes. And were waiting for the jeep to come and park next to the leaking fuel.

"Uhh, yea, ok. She's an airhead." Rika smirks as she takes a shot.

"And to answer your question. While answering this for myself probably means nothing. If I am an asshole. It won't be because of the way I'm treating these two. Though, I suppose the fact that I am hogging them both 'is' an asshole move. For the remaining guys on the planet that is." I pull the trigger as I speak. Sending yet another corpse to the ground.

"Hah. I can agree on that, these two sure seem to be quite the catch. Just, answer me one thing..." Rika stops shooting and turns to look at me.

"The mask, it stays during sex?" She asks with a flat tone...

I just kept staring through the scope for a few seconds, not aiming at anything. Then, I started laughing...

"What? It was an honest to God question. From the moment I first saw you till now. You never seem to take it off." Rika responds to my laughter by frowning slightly.

"I already told you, I didn't do anything to them. But, uhh. Seeing how they both agreed on a 'rule', where I have to take it off when we're in a safe location? I don't think they would be 'too' keep on the idea." I answer as I turn to look at Rika, shaking my head slightly. She just keeps looking at me for a couple of seconds. And seeing that I didn't say or do anything else...

"Wait, for real?" She asks as she raises her eyebrows in surprise.

"Yes for real." I respond flatly. And then, after a few seconds, it was her turn to start laughing instead...

And before this 'chat' could continue for any longer. The jeep's horn started to become audible, and louder...

"Ahh, that was fun. Hadn't had a good laugh since this whole thing started." She says as she lifts her rifle, then aims through it. All the

while still chuckling.

(Was it really 'that' funny?...)

"I wonder if your girlfriends will be mad if I decided that I want to spend more time with you. You're pretty fun to be around." She adds as she takes a shot at a corpse to the right.

"I don't know if they'll kill me first, or you." I respond as I chuckle, also taking a shot at a corpse to the left.

"Probably me, less hesitation." Rika answers casually as she shrugs with her shoulders, keeping her eye near the scope.

"Ok, Jeep's in position, the rest are coming our way. Get ready. Over." Rika adds while pressing the talk button on the radio. In response, the truck shook, its engine coming alive.

The moment the rest got near, rolling a barrel that was leaving a trail of liquid behind, we helped em up, along with the barrel. After everybody was on, along with the new guy, aka red armband dude. Rika informed the driver that we can move. And the truck slowly picked up speed once again. The jeep sounding its farewell by blowing its horn non-stop. Or, you know, the guys jammed its horn.

"How far should we go?" Glasses guy asks as he keeps the leaking barrel steady.

"More importantly, how will we pass the corpses that have probably swarmed ahead of us?" I ask as I point my thumb to my right.

"Drive through them?" The tall soldier answers with a question.

"Uhh, hope the thing won't flip over then." I respond.

"Dude, eat your damn tongue." The short soldier growls as he glances outside with a worried expression.

"We can just stop and turn the engine off. Corpses should just waltz right past us, minus the ones that will get stuck on the front." I say as I lift both arms slightly.

"As risky as driving through them. The truck is slow, what if the ones in the front break in the driver's cabin while it's still going slow?" The armband dude folds his arms as he glances at me.

"Fair n..."

Before I could finish my sentence, the truck shook, violently. And after a couple of heavy bumps, and a couple of corpses that appeared flattened on the road under us...

"Nuff..." I continue as I let out a dry cough.

"I will go a bit further away, then stop. Over." The radio on Rika crackles to life. And then goes silent again. Rika nods and leaves her rifle next to her, then undoes the top of her combat suit. Pulling a cigar from an inside pocket of her suit, placing it on her lips, and lighting it up before leaning her head against the truck's metal pane behind her.

(Ok, the horn is loud as fuck, it should gather most corpses there...)

And so, after the truck drove on for a few minutes, it started to slow down. Thankfully, the barrel was still leaking fuel, so all we had to do now was light the match. Though, we decided to wait for a bit, in order for more corpses to gather around our 'trap'...

-Sometime later-

"You know, this is going to be one hell of a firework." The generic dude speaks up as he keeps looking towards the distant barrels and truck. Which were by now, barely visible. As corpses had literally swarmed to the jeep.

"All I know is, that like this we'll save a lot of resources. Imagine having to manually burn or shoot them." The armband dude states.

(Thank you, thank you, hold your applause. No, really, hold it. Better if they don't know it's my plan, lest it haunts me back by making the General dump more shit on to me...)

"Ok. Let's light em up." Rika, who still had the cigar in her mouth, jumps down the truck. And tosses the cigar at the fuel line we had cut off a little further up, no need to blow out selfs up after all...

The moment the burning tip touched the ground, the liquid line flared up, a line of fire quickly spreading, dashing towards the grouped up corpses...

"This is going to be loud." I glanced at the flaming line as I helped Rika up.

"Oooh. I'm getting all giddy." Rika adds with a rather playful giggle as she turned to look towards the soon to be flaming pyre...

And as the flame rushed into the mass of corpses, it disappeared from our sight. And...

Nothing...

"Shouldn't barrels expl..."

And a deafening explosion shut whoever was talking up...

"OHHH YEEAAH!" The generic dude shouts as he gets up on his feet, making a fist pump towards the roof.

(Heeeere's, kool aid man.)

"WHOO! Burn ya fuckers! Burn!" The short soldier also shouts as he also springs off his seat, trading a high-five slap with the generic dude.

"Hahhh, an explosion that loud. It will gather every corpse in the damn field..." I nod slightly as I also get up, a smirk on my face as the flames roared in the distance.

"And the car is still honking." Rika adds as she also gets up.

"So even more ka-boom is to follow." I respond with a chuckle.

"Ha, let it blow, fair trade-off for clearing the whole damn field." The armband guy answers as he claps his hands once.

"By the way. How will they put off the fire? Corpses are flammable, so it's not like it will run out of fuel any time soon." I ask as I turn to look at the rest, pointing behind me with my thumb.

"Ah, we have two firetrucks, small ones. If they ain't enough, the airport has big ones. Even if they don't work. We have enough manpower to push them if need be." The armband guy answers once again.

"Guess, we just took over the field then." I fold my arms and nod as I turn to look at the fire again.

"Easy peasy, now the building itself is left. Which will be the responsibility of another team. Because I, for one, am getting drunk as fuuuck." Glasses guy exclaims with a toothy one-sided smirk.

(Looking at this right now, it feels like getting back the city might not be that hard. If the rest of the army's higher-ups ain't lead-brained that is.)

And as the fire raged, a second explosion went off, this one coming from the jeep. Sending a rather big group of flaming corpses flying through the air.

"I will inform the outpost to move in for the second phase. Over." The radio speaks up.

"I feel a bit sorry for the ones that will be picked to clear the building. Close quarters with 'these' things, not a fun situation." The generic dude sighs as he looks towards Rika.

"Heard they have some heavily armored units set up for this." Armband guy responds.

"Hey, worse case, we just bomb the thing. All we really need is the tower anyway." The tall soldier shrugs as he keeps looking outside...

And with that, we waited in relative silence, looking at the flames that must have reached at least fifteen meters height...

Until...

"I'm going to turn on the engine. Tell your girlfriends not to scream like a bunch of little girls the moment the truck starts shaking. Over." The driver chuckles while speaking through the radio.

"Ai, fuck you too." The short soldier responds as he slams the butt of his gun on the wall behind the driver's seat, for the second time.

"The others are here? Over." Rika asks as she presses the talk button on the radio.

"Yep. And them being here, means it's a job well done on our part. Over" The driver responds...

And with that, the truck's engine got turned on, and we started moving for a few minutes, until we reached the bridge once again. And the moment we passed it, I saw a couple of jeeps blocking the road to the airport behind us. After that, the driver shut the engine and stopped the truck, this time for good.

"Alright team. You were all really wonderfully wonderful. But I have a bottle of Bacardi waiting for me, and I don't wanna keep it waiting." Glasses dude gets up as he speaks, before jumping down the truck, followed shortly after by the rest of Souichiro's men.

"He gets to get drunk, I get to stand in attention. I think I made a couple of wrong life choices. Heh, good work team, good luck." The tall soldier chuckles as he also exits the truck.

"Do you have to say it out loud? Now I feel depressed too." The short soldier adds as he also exits the truck, leaving me and Rika inside.

"Well, let's get going." I say as I also get out, Rika nodding and following suit...

"What are you going to do now?" Rika asks after we moved a couple of meters away from the truck.

"Find Saya and Saeko, go for a walk. Do nothing." I respond as I look around at the soldiers that were running around, setting up tables, erecting temporary fences and tents, shouting orders at one another...

"Well, you won't have to look for them from the looks of it." Rika points behind me as she tilts her head.

I turn around, to see Saya and Saeko coming my way, along with...

(... Well, shiet...)

"Ahh, I just remembered. I need to do, the thingi. Have fun~." Rika exclaims with a playful tone as she pats me on the back, then quickly turns to leave. The reason?

"Humm, I guess I was wrong about you. Good, good." The General speaks up. Saya's mother and father were also with him. Along with Saeko and Saya herself.

"Now take a small break, the team heading inside the building will be leaving in five. You're going with them." The General continues...

(What? WHAT!? Oh you fucking fuck fuckity fuck fuck fuck. Should have expected this, but ughh, let me unload my mag on his fat ass!)

"Really now? What's next? Want me to carry your groceries?" I 'ask' as I found myself with an annoyed, one-sided snarl.

"Watch your mouth kid! You should be glad you're of any use! Preferential treatment does not come for free! " The General barks back.

"Do you intend to take my men without my confirmation General?" Shouchiro then steps in, looking down at the angry dwarf.

"You have agreed to be part of our operations, taking part of your forces is only natural." The General responds as he looks back at Shoichiro.

"Yes, but it will be men that 'I' decide to give. I already have something that I need him for, so you will take somebody else if you really need to take one of my men." Shouchiro responds with a sharp tone.

(Great, now I'm between task n1 and task n2, when did I turn into fuckin property?)

"I would also like to ask him about some information he has." He continues.

"Private, information." He adds as he keeps staring at the General...

And after a few seconds, the General scoffs. Finally walking away, and almost instantly starts shouting at a group of soldiers in the distance...

(Jeez this guy's like a less rape-y, and less charismatic Shido.)

"Good riddance..." Saya whispers with a hiss as she keeps her arms folded under her chest, her head slightly hunched as she glared at the General...

"My daughter informed me about something that I need your input in." Shouchiro then turns to me.

I reflexively turn to Saya as her father stops talking. She lets out a small sigh as she stops glaring.

"I told papa about the foreigners we saw at the burning mansion." She says as she turns to look at me.

"Ahh, yea. Good thinking." I nod and turn to Souichiro.

"What did Saya tell you?" I ask.

"That they spoke English, were responsible for the mansion's state, were heavily armed mercenaries, and were looking for somebody." He responds with a serious tone.

"Yea, and that's pretty much it. They said they were looking for a mole. Also, they mentioned that their extraction will be by a port. Oh and, the mole was an 'egghead'. Aka, scientist." I answer. Shouchiro closes his eyes and nods, seemingly thinking of something.

"Hmm, I see. This city has only one major port, but three smaller ones. Normally, I would not pay attention to this. But they burned a whole refugee outpost down. They are being too hostile, and too effective for them to be just a bunch of random ne'er do wells" He says pretty much to himself.

"With the resources I currently have, I could watch over one of the ports. For the rest, we'll have to rely on the army. Hopefully, once we get connected with the rest of the military, we will find somebody a bit more, competent, to work with." Shouchiro turns to look towards the barking General as he speaks.

"There's also something else I need you to know" He adds as he turns to look at me again with a serious expression.

"I might have decided to overlook your past decision. But don't take it as proof that I agree with your choice to drag my daughter in needless danger." He says as he keeps staring at me with slightly narrowed eyes.

(I survived the apocalypse so far, to die from Saya's pissed off dad...)

"Papa, stop. It was my decision to do this, and he didn't even agree with me. But I couldn't just turn around and run..." She lowers her head slightly before staring back at her father. He responded by looking at his daughter, and saying nothing.

"You have grown..." Saya's mother then speaks up, and Saya turns to look at her, chest?...

I bring my hand to my face with an audible slap and start chuckling. Causing the pinkette to turn around and glare at me with blushing, puffed cheeks.

"W, what!" She shouts.

"You mother meant mentally, Saya..." I respond with a whisper, and Saya's face turns even redder...

"... I, I knew that!" She shouted before turning her back to me.

"Thank you for taking care of her up until now." Yuriko then continues speaking...

"I can take care of myself just fine." Saya whispered in a whiny voice, her back still turned to me...

"And the General was not wrong about one thing. You 'are' getting special treatment." Shouchiro then adds.

"The rooms you have been given are under my good grace, so I expect that if I ask of you, you will appear." He continues...

(... Great, the fun of being owned...)

"Let's go, we have a lot of work to do." Shouchiro then turns around to leave, his wife following behind him after giving us a slight, smiling bow.

(And Saya's dad just saved me from creepo-Generale, while also putting a leash on me. God, them conflicting feelings are real.)

"Uhh, I think I'm going to go back to my room." I say in a low tone as I turn around to look towards the bridge, soldiers running around on it, tossing the bodies that were not burning over the bridge.

"Are you alright?" Saeko asks as she starts walking next to me.

"Yea, I just don't want to be around the General. He might send me on toilet duty if he sees me wandering around." I respond with a chuckle.

(And I might as well use the benefits I have been given. If I am to pay for them in the long run anyway...)

"Ahh, good." Saeko answers with a small smile.

"Good?" I ask.

"I would get rather disheartened, if I found out that you would have to sleep through our date. Especially, since I have been waiting for it, all day." She answers as leans towards me, her eyes slightly narrowing as she keeps smiling.

"Hmm speaking of that. I wonder if the building's roof is unlocked." I respond as I glance at Saeko.

"It is." She answers flatly.

"You checked it?" I ask. Saeko nods at me.

"Hmm, guess the date is a date then." I chime as I lift both hands slightly...

"Why only Saeko gets to have a date..." Saya grumbles in a low tone as she keeps walking behind me...

Purple fire

"So I need to wipe it, like this?..." I ask as I keep sitting on my bed. Running the napkin in my hand from the tsuba, all the way up to the tip of the blade. An open sword cleaning kit on the stand to my left next to the bed. My mask and balaclava also next to me on the bed.

"Yes, and be careful not to touch it with your fingers, or you will have to do it all over again." Saeko responds with a serious tone while sitting next to me.

She had her hair up in a ponytail, and was wearing one of my own shirts, and pants. The reason? She took a bath in my room after we got here. And didn't bring any of her own clothes...

"Is it really 'that' bad?" I ask as I turn to look at her with an arched eyebrow. Saeko nods almost instantly as she keeps looking at the blade.

"Your fingerprints have oils that can damage the blade. If you do not take good care of your sword, it will not take good care of you. Also, It is considered to be disrespectful." She answers as she turns to look at me...

"And I need to do this, after every time I cut something with it..." I add as I turn to look at the now shiny sword in my hands.

"Yes, or you will end up with a rusty blade and a blunt edge." Saeko responds with the same serious tone as she keeps staring at me...

(... When she told me that she didn't clean my blade because of its horrible condition. I feared that this would be half a scolding lesson. And sadly, I was right. Or, Saeko is really cut and dry when it comes to sword maintenance.)

"Don't space out Naier." Saeko pokes my shoulder as she leans her face towards me.

"Was not spacing out." I answer almost instantly.

"Then don't stop your hand." She responds right after...

"You should have told me that you did not do some basic maintenance on the blade after Hitomi gave it to you. The previous owner took really bad care of it." She adds as she turns to look at the sword.

"So, after this is done. Will it cut titanium?" I 'ask' as I turn to look at Saeko.

"No Naier, trying to cut something this hard with a sword this cheap will damage the blade." She responds flatly.

(... What? So expensive blades 'can' cut titanium here? And holy crap, the joke just went right over her head. Too much tunnel vision on our dear samurai right now...)

"Why are you staring at me?..." She asks after blinking at me a couple of times.

(Jeez..)

I turn my head to look back at the sword without answering.

"It's kinda funny though..." I add as I glance at our 'maintenance equipment'. Saeko tilts her head questionably in response.

"All the instruments are so small. Small piece of cloth, small hammer, small uhh, grinding stone power in a whatchamacallit. And then, a giant bottle of mineral oil." I continue as I let out a small chuckle...

"The kit did not have an oil bottle inside. And mineral oil is our best replacement. We are really lucky that Saya's father had some to spare. The small hammer is used to remove the pegs in the sword's handle. The 'whachamacallit' as you called it, is indeed grinding stone powder. None of these have any reason to be giant, they function as well in their current size. And it also makes it easier to

carry them around." Saeko answers as she also turns to look at the items.

I just nod back in silence as I keep working on the blade...

-Several minutes later-

"Uhh, well. Is this good enough? For now at least?" I ask as I finally stop pestering the blade. Lifting the sword slightly, making it reflect the evening sun.

"Hm. Much better. Could use some more polishing. But it will do for now." Saeko nods with a small smile. She then gets off the bed and takes the sheath that we had left by the wall ahead of us. Before coming back to me and handing me the sheath.

"Now, all I need to do is add plus five fire damage to it and I can make corpse torches." I say as I laugh through my nose, sheathing the blade and leaving it next to me on the bed.

"Umm. Do what?" Saeko asks as she sits on the bed, looking at me with one eyebrow slightly raised.

"Ahh, nothing. Video game nerd talk." I respond as I shake my head.

"Oh..." Saeko just nods as she keeps staring at me. And then, her eyes went slightly wide...

"Ahh, now that you mentioned that. I forgot to inform you about something." She adds as she turns to look towards the desk with the dead laptop.

"The computer in my room. It is still functional." She adds casually...

"WHAT?!" I shout, causing Saeko to slightly jump in place as she darted her head to me, her eyes wide open in what I can only call shock.

"I am, sorry. I, did not find the time to tell you." She then bowed her head slightly as she kept sitting on the edge of the bed.

"Ahh. Don't apologize. Just surprised. Didn't mean to shout." I respond as I bring one hand to the back of my head. Then shake my other hand.

Saeko pulled herself back up from the bow as she lifted her head to look at me. Then placed her hand over her mouth, and started giggling...

"What's going on!?" And, a wild Saya then swung the door that led to the hallway wide open. Her hair down, wearing a black tank top and a green mini skirt.

"Uhh. Nothing?" I answer as I tilt my head.

"I, I heard you shout." Saya responds as she turns to look at me, then at the mask next to me...

(... Don't tell me she'll go all puffy on me because I'm not wearing my mask now...)

"Saeko just failed to inform me that we have a working computer here." I add, turning Saya's attention back towards me.

"We do?" She asks as she tilts her head with an eyebrow arched up.

"Yea, in Saeko's room." I answer with a nod.

"I see..." She hums as she lowers her head, putting her hand under her chin, as if she was thinking about something...

"Something's wrong?" I ask after a couple of seconds, seeing that Saya was not reacting.

"A computer, it's really important as an item now that we don't have electronics. Why would they just leave it there? They didn't know it worked?" Saya asks while still looking at the ground.

"It was already open when I got to the room. But, it was also locked behind a password. Maybe they tried to open it and failed?" Saeko answers with her own question.

(Failed? Because they couldn't unlock a user's password? I find that hard to believe. Safe mode should work here. I know, I already used it on my computer once.)

"Hmm..." Saya just nods, then after a few seconds, she lifts her head and looks at Saeko.

"I'll ask Papa about it." She adds before turning to leave. Only to stop, and turn to face Saeko once again.

"And. I, just want to make one thing clear. If tomorrow we'll have to move. Then the next time we'll be in a safe zone, it'll be automatically 'my' turn to spend time with Naier." She responds as she folds her arms.

"All I got was a few minutes, while you two have been sitting here for hours." She adds with a slight pout as she keeps staring at Saeko.

"I understand." Saeko responds with a small nod.

"And when that time comes, I expect that you'll respect my time with him." Saya adds.

"The same way you do?" Saeko 'asks' with a smirk.

"I, I just thought something happened, not my fault. How many times have you ever heard this idiot shout." Saya shakes her head, then points her finger at me, her sight still locked on Saeko.

"True. And, I understand. I will respect your privacy, as long as you respect mine." Saeko answers as she nods. Saya nods back, then closes the door...

(That, just got WAY too surreal.)

"Ok. This just happened." I say as I keep looking at the closed door.

"Hmm?" Saeko just tilts her head at me, both her eyebrows raised.

"I'll respect yours, if you respect mine." I add as I tilt my head.

"Well, I wonder whose fault it is. That I got to share..." Saeko adds as she makes a one-sided smirk at me...

"And now you're just jabbing me at blind spots. You know I have no comebacks from this..." I say as I lift both hands.

"I am merely stating the truth." She responds with a smile.

"Doesn't make it any less, jabby." I retort as I let my hands fall. Saeko just chuckles with her mouth closed, but stays otherwise quiet...

For a bit, 'too' long, if you ask me...

(... Uhh, awkward silence is awkward...)

Saeko just kept glancing around the room while sitting on the edge of the bed. I, pretty much did the same thing while sitting by the pillows...

"I should get these things back in their place..." I spoke up as I turned to face the stand with the maintenance equipment.

"Ah, let me help." Saeko almost instantly gets off the bed and trots over to my side of the bed. Then sits on the floor next to the stand, and in front of me.

"I, must admit. I didn't expect that you'd get this excited over a working computer." She says with a calm tone as she starts placing the equipment back in the box, minus the mineral oil bottle obviously. As it was almost twice the size of the small wooden toolbox itself.

"Heh, you obviously have never seen the pre-outbreak me." I laugh through my nose as I take the sheathed sword and lean it against the stand...

Saeko then lowered her eyes. Stopping her hands to a halt as she kept looking towards her thighs.

"Saeko?" I ask as I turn to look at her.

"That, is true." She responds as she keeps looking down.

"I really, don't know a lot about what you did, from when before all this started..." She adds...

"But, is it wrong? That I am glad. That we did not know each other before the outbreak?" She asks, not moving her head from its downcast position.

"Uhh, You were among the most famous girls in the school, yet nobody knew about 'you' as a person, or what was going through your head. Big chance is, I would also be among these people." I answer.

(Not really, but you know. Can't say otherwise without coming off like a complete creep.)

"That is exactly what I mean." She responds as she lifts her head to look at me, the inner corners of her eyebrows raised in a worried expression.

"What if you knew me, if you had a wrong impression of who I was. What if you then found out about the 'real' me. What if..." She stops her sentence as she lowers her head again.

"What if I was bit the day the outbreak started?" I 'ask'. Causing her to lift her head towards me again.

"What if I didn't take that plane to Japan? What if I was in a different school? What if somebody else was there for you instead of me.

What if, is not a reason to wreck your brain over. A million things could have happened that could have changed how things played out. Maybe for the better, maybe for the worse. So do quit worrying about it. Especially since that solemn expression really doesn't suit you." I continue, bringing my hand to her cheek...

Saeko then places her own hand over mine and closes her eyes, slightly rubbing her cheek on my hand.

"Naier, could you, do me a favor please..." She whispers in a weak tone as she opens her eyes slightly. Lifting her head until her eyes met mine.

"Even if you won't really mean it..." She tightens her grip on my hand before bringing her second hand on my wrist, essentially grabbing my hand with both of hers.

"Can you, please say that you love me?..." She whispers as she keeps looking up at me...

(... Uhh. What?...)

I blink a couple of times...

(The hell does she mean. 'Even if I don't mean it'...)

And I kept staring at her. A blushing, yet somewhat wistful expression on her face.

(I uhh, wait. I, never told her that I love her?...)

"Saeko. For starters, please get off the ground." I said as I tried to poke her cheek with the hand she had 'taken over'. She responded by staying in place, not moving an inch. Just lowering her head and closing her eyes without saying anything.

"Uhh, have it your way." I let out a slight sigh and slid off the bed, sitting next to her on the floor. She opens her eyes, and looks at me with a confused expression.

"First. No, I won't tell you something that I don't mean, especially when it's something like that." I add as I lean my face closer to her.

"I, understand. I am sorry, I should not ha..."

"Second. I do love you. As weird as it sounds, seeing as I'm split between you and Saya." I cut her off.

"You, didn't have to add the last part you know." Saeko responds as she finally lets out a small chuckle. A slight smile appearing on her lips.

"Never said that I would give you the perfect answer." I answer as I glance away from her for a few seconds.

"Now. Don't reflexively Karate chop my head ah?" I add as I turn to look back at her.

"Huh? What, do you miii!... Ohh..." Her sentence gets cut in half as I pass my free hand under her legs, then lift her up as I also get up. Essentially holding her 'princess' style.

"You didn't want to get on the floor..." I respond as I plop back on the bed while still holding her, then slide to its top part and put my back against the headboard. Ending up with me sitting on the bed, while Saeko was curled up on me.

"And this is way more comfortable." I add as I pull my hand from under her legs, then rest it on her thigh.

Saeko shuffles around for a bit, grabbing my shirt with her hand so she can readjust her posture. Before finally placing her head on my shoulder with a small sigh. Her hand still pulling on my shirt...

(It's weird. How she seems to be so, weak right now. Weak? Meek? Whatever it is, it's definitely not her usual 'self'...)

"This reminds me, of when we stayed at that house, after we got cut off at the pharmacy..." Saeko whispers as she closes her eyes.

"Yea, I remember. I also remember how you freaked out after you realized that you drooled on me and ended up falling flat off the couch we slept on." I respond with a small smirk.

"Humm. You had to mention 'this' out of everything..." Saeko answers as she stops gripping my shirt, instead tightly wrapping her arms around me.

"Well, want to try again?" I ask as I fondle her hair...

"I, longed for another chance to be close to you. To be just the two of us." She lifts her head slightly without taking it off my shoulder. Her eyes blurry and half-closed, her cheeks deeply flushed.

(Ok. Not kissing her now, would be an insult...)

I slowly run my hand from her thigh to her cheek. And as I do, Saeko closes her eyes completely and opens her mouth slightly. And, after my hand was under her chin, I closed my own eyes. And locked my lips on hers...

For, how long? I don't know, I wasn't exactly paying attention to anything other than Saeko right now. So, don't ask me how both my hands ended up on her back and 'under' her shirt. I 'really' don't know...

-Don't ask me how much time later-

I slowly pulled my head back and opened my eyes. Saeko kept her own eyes closed, taking slow, deep breaths through her mouth.

"Don't tell me you fell asleep." I whisper as I pull one arm from under her shirt, then poke her cheek. She closes her mouth and lets out a small giggle through her nose, then finally opens her eyes. Her pupils visibly dilated.

"I changed my mind." She says with a soft tone as she brings her face next to mine, slowly rubbing her cheek on mine.

"And that means?" I ask as I hug her once again.

"I don't want to go to the roof. I want to stay here. Like this..." She responds as she nuzzles her nose on my neck.

(... Maybe, I should lock my door...)

I respond by lightly running my hand up and down her back...

And we stayed like that. For two minutes, five minutes, ten minutes. Until, Saeko stopped moving completely. Well, other than breathing I mean.

(Uhh. She, actually fell asleep?)

As I turned to move my head, the purpled haired samurai that was glued on me letting out a soft moan and tightened her arms around me. Nonetheless, I turned to look at her face.

(Eyes, closed alright.)

I then poke her cheek a couple of times, no reaction.

('Somebody' is gonna be sore all over from sleeping like this...)

I start trying to 'undo' Saeko's grasp on me...

And fail, multiple times. As she kept wrapping herself around me every time I tried to get her off me.

(... Ehh? She's secretly part octopus or something?...)

Until, after the number of tries reached the double-digit. I managed to free myself. I then placed Saeko normally on the bed. And she almost instantly warped her arms around the nearest pillow.

(And I just got replaced by a pillow.)

I chuckle slightly as I ruffle the sleeping girl's hair.

(She told me that she would be disheartened if I fell asleep. And ended up falling asleep herself. Must have been really tired...)

I kept looking at Saeko as I sat by the bed's corner...

(I need to get that computer, cause nerd rage aside. It can be very useful to have, especially if it's not battery dead. But, uhhh, she probably has her door locked. And I can't just grope her around for the key. So, I guess I'll wait until she wakes up. Yea...)

I lie down on the bed next to Saeko, and start staring at the ceiling...

(Hmm, glad that we didn't meet before the outbreak huh? Not that it would really matter, I know you better than you think my dear Samurai...)

And, I kept staring at the ceiling for a few minutes...

(Feels like falling asleep right now would be a waste of time to be honest...)

I turn to my side in order to face Saeko. Then extended my hand until it was over her cheek, lightly running my fingers on it. Saeko let out a small sigh through her nose, as her lips curving into a small smile. She then slowly opened her eyes while taking a deep breath.

"Somebody's tired apparently." I whisper as I keep my hand on her cheek.

"I, dozed off?" She brings one of her hands to her face and starts rubbing her eyes, before quickly grazing the corners of her lips with her fingers.

(Did she just check to see if she drooled again? Heh, sneaky snek.)

"If you're tired, then sleep. Especially now that you don't have to worry about 'what' is strolling about next door." I whisper as I pull my hand back.

"I, will have all day to sleep tomorrow. Today, I want the day to last for as long as possible." She responds as she stretches, extending her arms towards me, closing her eyes tightly...

She then grabbed my shoulders and slid up next to me. Wrapping her arms around me once again.

"I get the feeling that I'm a bad influence with how you keep wanting to laze on the bed..." I chuckle as I hug her back.

"You are the best thing that has happened to me." She replies as she nuzzles against my neck...

(... I should say 'figured'. But, uhh, hearing her say it. I guess I can understand 'why' she wanted to hear me say that I love her...)

"Now you're just exaggerating." I respond as I lightly scratch her back.

"Not in the slightest." She answers as she lifts her head to look at me.

"I am, scared of dying because of you." She adds as she keeps staring at me.

"Uhh. And that's, a good thing?" I ask as I arch an eyebrow...

Saeko blinks at me a couple of times, then closes her eyes as she starts chuckling while keeping her mouth closed.

"I apologize. I chose the wrong words to, express myself. What I meant to say was. That because of you, I now have something to look forward to. The time I spend with you, is important to me. And I don't want it to end." She answers as she tightens her arms around me even more, closing whatever little distance was left between us, I also tighten my own arms around her...

And then, silence. Long, long, silence...

Until...

(... Don't, tell me...)

I pull my head back to look at Saeko's face that had nestled right below mine. And sure enough.

(She's asleep. Again.)

I held myself back from chuckling as I closed my eyes and moved my head forward until my nose touched Saeko's head. A flowery scent invading my sense of smell.

(Wonder what shampoo she normally uses. Being that she used whatever was here now. Heh, guess all is good. When the thing that preoccupies my mind is Saeko's shampoo...)

And as I felt myself falling asleep with Saeko in my arms. I also felt her legs entangling mine.

(Damn, sleepy, octopuses...)

With that, I slowly drifted off to sleep. Or, I would have, as I heard a door open...

"Hey can I have the keys to Sae...." A new voice speaks up, before quickly turning silent again...

And then, nothing. Complete silence. Although, I could 'feel' something drilling holes into my back right now. An intense, stare...

"Ughhh, deep breaths. Deep breaths. You'll give the idiot a piece of your mind tomorrow. Do something stupid now, and Saeko do the same to you later..." I hear the voice whisper with a slightly annoyed tone.

"But, uhh. I do need the key to Saeko's room. So I need to wake them up. Yea, because I have to, not because I want too." The voice adds as I start hearing footsteps. And then...

"Hey..." Something starts shaking me...

"Hey, are you asleep?" The voice asks again.

(No, I'm standing still because I got nothing better to do. And maybe because I'm living up to my name of ninja penguin and listened in? Not telling her the second one though.)

I turn my head to meet a blushing, and pouty face. Aka, Saya.

"I need the keys to Saeko's room." She says as she glances at the sleeping purple-haired girl.

"Uhh, Saeko has the key." I respond as I keep looking at Saya.

"Well, can you take it and give it to me?" Saya 'asks' as she folds her arms with a slight frown.

"You want me to grope a sleeping girl to find where she has the key?" I 'ask' back. Causing Saya to blush even more.

"W, wake her up you idiot." She retorts as she keeps frowning at me. I nod as I try to keep a poker face, then turn to look at the sleeping girl.

"Uhh, Saeko?" I shake her lightly as I whisper. Saeko responds with a soft moan before she tries to hide her face between the pillow and myself. Causing the 'death stare' I was feeling behind me to increase ever so slightly.

(... Oh boy...)

"Hey, Saeko." I shake the girl again, this time with more force.

"Uhh, wha... mmm?" Saeko, with her eyes still closed. Lifts her head, looking like one of them standing, yet fast asleep kittens you could see in online videos.

"Where are the keys to your room?" I ask, half expecting to get no answer.

"Hmm, pants..." Saeko responds. And, starting pulling down her pants...

That, 'death stare' I mentioned before? Yea, let's just say that it just transformed into a 'death laser' now...

"Ahh, it's ok. I'll take them." I said as I grabbed both of Saeko's hands. Not that it helped much, seeing that her pants were already down to her knees...

Saeko nods with a soft moan and stops pulling down her pants. Instead wrapping her hands around me, again...

Ignoring the whole situation as well as I could, I checked the pockets in her pants. Until I finally found the key...

(Honestly, I'm afraid to turn around right now...)

None the less I stay as 'poker-faced' as I can and turn to look at Saya. Who, was staring at me, eyes narrowed, arms folded, and her lips slightly pursed...

(She's definitely mad.)

I then extend the key to her. She takes it and makes a swift full turn. Vocalizing out a rather loud 'HUM' as she trotted toward the door. Once she got out, she turned around and looked at me. Sticking out her tongue as she closed the door...

(... At least, she didn't slam the door...)

And a few seconds later, as if to remind me that she was also here, Saeko lets out another soft moan as she tightens her arms around me. Her pants, still down to her knees...

(At least she's wearing one of my own damn boxers. God knows I'd be dead right now, if she had decided to go 'commando' for some freaking reason...)

I turn my head back towards the sleeping girl as I let out a small sigh.

(And my chances of surviving 'tomorrow' keep decreasing...)

Needless to say, I was not very 'sleepy' right now...

(So, now I'm stuck here. And can't do jack shit. What with Saeko deciding that I'm a dakimakura...)

I keep glancing around as I take a deep breath...

(Huh, speaking of that pillow thing. I am pretty sure that in the ending credits of episode nine in the anime. There's a 'photo' of Saeko sleeping while hugging an oversized pillow. Now, who the fuck 'took' that photo, since Saeko is butt naked, or at least topless in that 'photo', is beyond me.)

I pull my head slightly back and look at Saeko's sleeping face...

(Then again, in the same 'board of pictures'. There's also a 'photo' of Saeko swaying on a child's swing while standing upright on it, laughing like a little kid. And the clothes she was wearing in 'that' photo, were the ones she wore after changing by the Humvee. Aka the short skirt with the cut, the boots, and the school shirt. Meaning, it's impossible that the 'swing' photo was ever 'taken'. Because neither Takashi, or Saeko had a camera on them. And between her changing to that attire, and the EMP burning everything, only the shrine episode was in between. And that's if we go by anime standards.)

I move my head forward and start to stare at the bottle of mineral oil...

(Speaking of episode nine, that was the episode of the 'shrine', wasn't it? Impeccable timing to think of that episode brain. But hey, can't really get salty right now, what with Saeko being wrapped around me like tin foil...)

I lower my sight slightly as I bring my hand next to Saeko's temple, then run my fingers along her hair.

(Still, if that 'photo' of her laughing on the swing is real. It's something, I have yet to see her do even once, laughing like that I mean. Can this, be my fault?...)

I close my eyes before shaking my head slightly. Then lift it, and look towards Saeko's thighs...

(More importantly, got to pull her frigging pants up. If she wakes up like 'this', she might think that 'I' pulled her pants down...)

And so. While trying to not move too much, or touch the wrong place. I bend myself so I can reach Saeko's pants...

(Come on you little fuckin shit...)

Still, while my hand did reach them, I could not get a grip on them, and Saeko was not making it any easier, what with her holding me down...

(Uhh, wait, the belt loop.)

I nod slightly and pass one finger through the belt loop, then pull the top part of the pants up.

(Ok, now the lo...)

Yet, before I could even finish that thought, Saeko groans and untangles my legs from hers. Then, using her foot. She steps on the bottom hem of the pants, and pulls her other leg up. Completely taking off the pants from one of her legs. She then used the now

naked leg to take her pants off completely, before kicking them off the bed...

(... YOU, WHO, WHAT! WHAT?!)

And then, she wrapped her legs around mine again...

(... Oh you gotta be freaking kidding me. Well, uhh. At least 'I'm' still wearing pants. It's hard enough to resist letting my arms wonder as it is. If I could feel her on me. Let's just say that I don't think that she could go on sleeping for uhh, too long...)

I try to lift my head to look where the pants landed...

(Uhh, fuck it. Better see if I can get a cover over us instead.)

And so, I grab the blanket that was under us, and start the painstaking process of trying to pull it, with two people still being on it...

-Quite sometime later... -

(Come, ooonn)

And with a final pull, I finally manage to completely 'unstick' the blanket from under me and Saeko...

(Ughh, my whole frigging arm hurts...)

I then used the blanket to cover both me and the purple-haired octopus under it.

Saeko, who was still asleep, shuffled slightly the moment the blanket fell over her. But that was about it.

(Well, don't know if I'll fall asleep, but whatever. The sky is starting to turn deep orange, so I guess the roof date is indeed a bust.)

I closed my eyes as I pulled Saeko closer to me, not that I 'could' pull her much closer, she was already stuck on me from top to bottom after all...

(Tomorrow, will be so fucking weird...)

Pink Tornado

"FUUUUUUCCCK! Dig! dig, dig! DIG! You retarded mining laser!" I shout as I punch the recharging laser gun in my hand.

"Punching it won't make it recharge faster!" The blue scaled, blue-haired dragon girl shouts at me. Her greatsword on the ready as she kept staring at the dark cave corridor that extended behind us...

And, with a 'whirring' sound, followed by a 'click'. The laser gun's lights flared up.

"Finally! God I don't know why I came down to this fukin planet..." I groan as I point the laser gun at the wall ahead of me and pull the trigger. The rocky wall quickly evaporating, creating a circular uphill tunnel as the laser dug deeper and deeper..

"Because you wanted the loot! Now move your ass! The ground is shaking again!" The dragon girl shouts as she runs past me.

"Huh?! Wha?! Why are you running? Why are you running?! You're the close-range fighter here!" I shout as I stop using the laser and start running after the dragon girl.

"Like hell I'm fighting these things!" She shouts as she disappears into the dark, uphill tunnel...

"You're supposed to be my protection damit! I'm a gun user!" I shouted as I kept running up the tunnel, but got no response...

"Raina dammit! Don't outrun meaaAA!" Yet, before I could finish my sentence, something tripped my leg, causing me to fall face flat on the ground...

"The, hell..." I shake my head and turn to look behind me, towards my leg. A small tentacle warped around it...

"... I'm, screwed..." I whisper. And the ground, start to slowly shake...

While still on the ground, I roll to my back and ready my white, fire elemental sniper rifle. And then switch its mode to 'flamethrower'...

A few seconds pass, and the ground stops shaking...

"SCRRRRRRRRREEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE!"

Only for it to burst open right below my feet, a giant, rocklike worm blasting off the ground with a loud screech, towering over me as its single, glowing yellow eye locked itself on me.

"Burn you fucker! Buuuurn! AHHHRRRRGG!" I scream as I pull the trigger, a giant stream of fire engulfing the worm...

The giant monstrosity screeches as it sways backward, then screeches even louder as it dove straight into the flames, making a beeline towards me...

"Shit!" I reflexively close my eyes and look away, waiting for the thing to tear me apart...

...

Yet, nothing...

I open one of my eyes as I turn to look towards where the worm should be at. But, no worm was there. Instead, the thing was now warped around me, weighing me down....

"The fu..." Before I could even blink at the weirdness, the worm tightens its body around me. A, flowery scent? Coming off of it?...

"The fuuuuuu?" And then, I felt my neck, getting wet. Even though, I was wearing full body armor...

"Rape, whi, stle..." I groaned as I started to feel my consciousness fade...

Soon, I could feel nothing. Other than that wet feeling on my neck that is. And that something, was weighing me down...

And after some time, slowly, my consciousness started to once again return...

As I opened my eyes again, the first thing I saw. Was a purple-haired head. Well ok, the 'first' thing I saw as a white ceiling, but who cares about that. Then, I figured out 'why' I kept feeling weighed down, as that purple-haired head, had a body. And that body was on top of me. I'm also pretty sure by now. That that head, in other words Saeko, which was 'nibbling' on my neck right, was also the one that was giving off this 'flowery' scent...

I blink a couple of times as I glance around. The occasional, wet 'smack', being heard as the culprit on top of me was uhh, molesting? My neck...

(... Uhh, she's, really going at it. You mean to tell me she has been doing 'this', while I was still asleep?...)

As if to respond to my thought, Saeko lets out a rather, thought-provoking moan...

"If I didn't know you any better, I'd say you're trying to provoke a certain, 'reaction' out of me right now..." I whisper at Saeko's ear as I lightly run my fingers over her spine.

Saeko then stopped being all provocative at my neck, and lifted her head until it was completely over mine, before locking her eyes with me.

"Good morning~." She chimed as she lowered her head, rubbing her nose on mine before lowering her head even more, our lips touching

shortly after. Not even seemingly bothered by the fact that she got 'caught'...

(I'm giving this wake-up call, an eight. Two points lost because of that weird-ass dream)

After a few seconds, she lifted her head, only to snuggle up against my shoulder...

"Normally, I would be disappointed that I lost my whole day sleeping..." She says as she closes her eyes.

"But I slept so peacefully that I don't really mind. I, even had a nice dream." She adds with a small chuckle...

(At least 'you' had a nice one. I got molested by a giant worm 'thing' because of your neck nibbling...)

"Any idea what's the time?" I ask.

"Still pretty early I reckon." Saeko answers.

"Hmm, you think? How come?" I ask again.

"Saya did not come to wake you up. It is 'her' day after all, I do not think she would waste a lot of time waiting after she got up. And, I also do not think she would let herself sleep late either. I know I would not, if I was in her shoes." She added as she lightly poked my chest.

"I see. You, got a point." I nod slightly as I pass the arm she was laying on under her, then rest it on her waist.

"There, is also something else that I wanted to ask you." She says as she lifts her head again, bringing it closer to my ear.

"What exactly did you do to me yesterday, that needed me 'losing' my pants?" She 'asks' in a rather seductive tone.

(I fucking knew it...)

"Nothing, you took em off yourself." I respond with a deadpan face as I turn to look at her. Saeko just keeps looking at me with a slight smirk on her lips, and an 'oh yea?' expression...

"Really." I add as Saeko narrows her eyes, smirk still on her face.

And, just as she kept creeping her face closer to mine...

The door opened. Saya appearing behind the door. Her hair down with a black shirt and the school skirt. Same outfit as yesterday, except she was just wearing the unbuttoned white jacket she usually wears over the shirt. What's more, she now had a laptop open in her arm, playing some rather 'loud' music. I honestly could not even make it out because of the volume, sounded, classical?

(Daum, Saya just made an entrance...)

"Well, I guess I will be all by my lonesome now..." Saeko whispers to my ear. I just turn to her as my eyebrows end up making a straight line. She giggles in response as she gives me a quick kiss. Then gets off the bed and heads straight to the bathroom. Did, I mention she was not wearing pants?... Yea...

Did I mention Saya was in the room?... Yea...

Did I mention that she was now looking at me like a puffed up puffer fish?... Yea...

"You know it was not me who took off her pants, you were here yesterday when it happened." I say as I get to a sitting position, slightly lifting my hands in 'surrender'.

Saya grumbled something. But among the loud music, I just saw her mouth move...

(I think, she just called me a pervert...)

I was about to get off my bed, when I decided to quickly glance under the covers before taking them off.

(... Ok, I'm still wearing pants...)

I let out a small sigh as I got off the bed, while in the meantime, Saeko also re-entered the room.

"Well uhh, I'm going to the bathroom." I say as I pretty much bailout of the room after grabbing new clothes...

-Several minutes later-

After washing my face and changing to a 'new' set of the same clothes. I exit into the main room, Saeko, still with no pants on...

(... I swear, this girl. She just doesn't give a fuck. First the apron thing, now this.)

"Well, if you're about done lazing about like a sloth?" Saya lowers the music on the laptop as she turns to me...

"I can fix the room, you can go if you want to, just leave the keys to my room here please." Saeko adds as she glances at me, then at Saya. The pink-haired girl nods, and takes a key out of her jacket's chest pocket, then walks up to Saeko and gives it to her.

"I take it that you managed to open the pc from the fact that you are blasting us with flying bumblebees?" I 'ask' as I keep looking at Saya.

"Hum, of course I opened it. Because 'I', was working. While you two were being all giggly." Saya responds with a huff as she turns to look at me with a smug expression.

(Aww, somebody's being salty~)

"Ai, got you loud and clear. Today, all work. No giggly stuff and no cuddly stuff." I answered with a smirk as I lifted one hand and made

an 'ok' sign. Saya blinked at me a couple of times, before puffing her cheeks, narrowing her eyes at me as she started to blush.

"I, I'm going to decide what we do today. Not you." She declares with a flat tone.

"Now move." She adds as she turns to leave the room. I just turn to glance at Saeko while slightly shrugging my shoulders. Saeko responded by giggling after placing her hand over her mouth.

"You can go, I'll take care of the room." She tells as she finally picks up her pants. I nod and turn to leave.

"Oh and, Naier." Saeko then speaks up again, causing me to stop and turn around.

"I, love you." She adds with a tender smile.

(Cheesy comeback time.)

"Not as much as, I, uhhh, do." I answer as I try to keep a straight face...

Saeko stared at me for a few seconds, before she quickly tried to hide her mouth behind her hand as she started giggling uncontrollably...

(... Really now?)

"I, I apologize. But, your, your face... khh..." Saeko spelled out as she kept trying to hold herself from giggling. And Obviously, failing...

(Where's my mask?)

After a couple of seconds, Saeko managed to regain her composure...

"It seems. You, might need a bit of work. On this type of thing." She speaks up with a warm smile once again.

"You think?" I 'ask' as I fold my arms...

"Naieeeeer! Stop being a stupid snaaail! Hurry uuuup!" An annoyed voice shouts out from the hallway...

"You better get going. Girls can get really moody if you are not paying enough attention to them." Saeko then adds as she tilts her head, a smile still on her face.

"Well, I hope I paid enough attention to you then." I respond as I also tilt my head slightly..

"Naaaiieerr!" Saya groans once again...

I lift both my hands with an apologetic smirk, then turn to leave the room.

(God, this feels weird.)

Once I got out, I came face to face with an angry midget. Sorry, I meant an angry pikette.

"Ugh, about damn time. Come on." Saya rolls her eyes and turns around to walk towards her room, hugging the laptop.

And so, we went into Saya's room. Not much of a difference compared to mine, except the computer desk was against the windowed wall that was ahead of us, instead of the corner that it was on in my room. And well, it had no computer on it.

"So, what did you find?" I ask as Saya walks up to the desk, placing the computer on it before opening it.

"Except that you're an idiot?" Saya 'asks' back with a smirk and a chirpy tone as she turns her head to look at me, bending over to tap on the 'touchscreen' under the keyboard in order to wake up the computer.

(... Why, I got that sudden urge to uhh, slap her ass right now? Probably because she's calling me an idiot. Yep, definitely that's the reason...)

"Yea, except from that." I answer as I fold my arms.

"The internet is not working, not much of a surprise really, as we are missing basic infrastructure for that right now." She then answers with a serious tone as she turns to look at the screen.

"Now that means, this is just a...."

"That guy played sims..." I cut her off as I leaned up next to her, looking at the screen.

"Can you not interu-EEEEP!" Saya turns towards me as she starts to whine, only to end up throwing a Karate chop towards my head as she back-pedaled away from me...

I bring my hand to the spot that Saya just landed her hand on as I turn to her.

"Really now?" I 'ask' as I lower my hand.

"Y,you startled me! Not my fault..." She whines as she folds her arms, before looking away with a slight blush. I shake my head as I turn to look back towards the screen.

"Oh well..." I almost reflexively bring the cursor on the sims icon, and double click it. And after the logos and such run past, I pressed load game...

After a few seconds, Saya walks up next to the computer again. Arms still folded.

"What did you open?" She asks as she keeps looking at the black screen.

Her question got quickly answered, as a relatively big, seaside house appeared. Three people wandering inside said house. Or, well, two people. One named 'Naier Takagi', the other named 'Saya Takagi'. And, a dog...

"Why is that dog named 'Saeko the Bark-bark'?" I ask as I point at the dog on the screen. Ignoring the obvious reason which just made Saya's face go pale...

"L, let's just go outside!" She quickly slaps the laptop's lid shut, then grabs my pointing finger and starts dragging me out of the room...

(Huh. Funny how Saya's avatar looked a lot like her mother. I guess she wants to be like her when she's older? But, on the other hand...)

We exit Saya's room and make a beeline to the stairs...

(I'm pretty sure that I usually DON'T walk around, topless...

But, uhh. For some reason, I almost 'DRAW A PICTURE' of her. Sitting in front of the laptop, in the middle of the night...)

I turned to look at Saya who was in front of me, still pulling me by my finger as we walked down the stairs...

"Bark-bark." I blurt out as I try to stop myself from chuckling.

"S,shut up." Saya responds by tightening her grip on my finger.

(Heh, let's not tell her that she is more of a 'bark-bark' compared to Saeko. I mean, that girl barely shouts. Or, was it a subtle way to call Saeko a bitch?...)

And just as we reach the exit door, I stop dead in my tracks...

"Oh god. I forgot something really important." I say with a grim tone as my eyes go wide. Saya turning to look at me without letting go of my finger.

"I forgot my face in my room..." I add with a deadpan tone. I, could honestly see the three dots over Saya's head as she was 'processing' what I just said with a blank expression. Until, she narrowed her eyes and puffed her cheeks, leaning her face towards me.

"No. Mask." She flatly declared.

"But.."

"No buts" She cuts me off.

"We left the safe zone the moment we went down the stairs, my minimap is flashing yellow right now." I respond as I look down and to my right, as if I was in a first-person game.

"Your who is wha..." Saya frowns as she opens her mouth slightly with a confused expression...

"My minimap, is yellow." I answer with a serious face. Well, as serious as it could get considering what I was actually saying right now...

"Are you stupid?" Saya asks with the same confused expression.

"Only on, uhh. What day is it?" I ask as I tilt my head.

"You are stupid." Saya groans as she rolls her eyes and turns to look towards the exit.

"Fine, let's go. But no cuddles. Cuddles are a 'room' thing only." I add with the same deadpan voice. Saya turned to stare at me for a few seconds, and then blinked a couple of times.

"W, what makes you think I even 'want' to something like that, stupid!" She yelps as she turns to look towards the exit again, letting go of my finger so she can fold her arms.

"Just making sure." I shrug as I start walking towards the exit. Saya grumbled something in a low whiny tone before following behind me like a pouty kid.

"So, where are we going?" I ask the moment we got out.

"I don't know..." She says with the same whiny voice as she keeps her arms folded, still not looking at me.

"Ok then, let's wander around until something happens..." I respond with a shrug, then extend my arm towards her. Which she didn't see, as she kept looking away...

"Saya." I called out to her, my arm still extended.

"What..." She groans as she turns to look at me. Then looks at my hand, and keeps staring at it.

"It's a hand." I say with a slight chuckle.

"I, I know that you idiot..." She responds in a low tone, then takes a few steps towards me before grabbing my hand, albeit a bit forcefully. Her face still looking anywhere but me.

(Moody aren't we...)

"Come on, let's go." I motion with my head towards the exit, Saya just nods.

And so, we exit the building, and start wandering. To where? No target really, we just walked...

-Some time of walking later-

After doing circles around the building for longer than it was necessary, we decided to wander mostly around the 'backyard' of the building. But...

(Shouichiro's men, keep eyeballing us...)

"Why do you keep glancing around?" Saya, whose moody attitude had thankfully dissipated by now, asks as she keeps looking at my face.

"Your dad's men are constantly glancing towards us." I respond.

"And?" Saya asks with a flat tone.

"And now I'm half expecting your dad to pop up and chase me with a sword." I answer with a chuckle. Saya just groans as she rolls her eyes, though there was a slight smile on her lips.

"Then don't do anything stupid." She adds with a smug look as she turns to me.

"Define 'stupid'." I respond as I turn to her with an arched eyebrow. Saya slightly narrowed her eyes, before throwing a quick jab at my sides with her free hand.

"Oi, what did you do that for?" I ask as I 'bend' away from her.

"You had the face of somebody who was about to do something stupid." She retorts with the same smug look.

"Jeez, just don't blame 'me' later. If I'm being all cuddly with Saeko. She has yet to 'jab' me for being 'stupid'." I answer as I turn to look at her. Her smug expression quickly disappearing as she kept staring at me.

"Uhh, that's. Uhhh. It's, uuuu..." She blinks at me a couple of times, before pouting slightly and lowering her head in defeat as she could not think of a comeback.

"Unfair..." She adds in a low tone as she keeps looking away.

"I'm being realistic. Or at least, more realistic than wandering around a house, topless." I add as I try to hold myself back from smirking.

"You don't have to mention that again you know! And for your advice. It just got late and I had to close the game before I could finish editing..." She loudly responded, though the sentence ended with a mumble...

"So? What would I 'normally' be wearing?" I lift an eyebrow as I smirk slightly.

"A penguin costume..." Saya mumbles with a slight pout...

Before I could say anything back, a couple of guards ran past us.

"Hurry! Bring the flamethrowers and two jeeps, there's another horde coming towards the west fence!" One guard shouts as he points at the jeeps parked in the distance, a second guard nodding and running towards the jeep as a third one turns to run towards the front part of the building.

"Hey! Go back inside! It's not safe to stay out right now!" The third guard shouts at us as he runs past us.

Saya turns her head to follow the running guard with a frown. Who didn't even bother to check whether we heard him or not.

"Let's go back inside." I tug her hand, causing her to turn to me.

"Because he said so?" Saya asks with the same frown.

"Because I don't want to get dragged into this. They mentioned that 'another' horde is coming. Meaning they dealt with more than one. They can handle this without us." I respond as I shake my head.

Saya looks at me for a few seconds, then lets out a small sigh.

"If you put it like that. Fine, let's go back." Saya responds. Though, in deference with her nonchalant answer, she quickly turned around and started pulling me as she headed towards the door that led into the main building. I think, I saw her smile too?...

(My, if I didn't know her any better. I would say that she was actually looking for a reason to go back inside...)

Not gonna lie, I did find myself chuckling slightly as we headed back...

After going back into the building, we headed up the stairs and towards the floor with our rooms. Until finally, we reached Saya's room and got inside. All the while, Saya was still holding my hand...

"Hmm, don't think I can get lost now." I spoke up the moment I closed the door behind me.

"Huh? What?" Saya asks as she glances at me, then back inside the room. I just tug her hand in response, making her turn to look towards her own hand.

"Oh. I, forgot it..." She adds as she lets go of my hands, then quickly folds her arms under her chest.

"W, well. We're here now..." Saya mumbles in a low tone.

"Yea." I respond as I turn to look at the pinktte.

"Y, you said. We can... uddle in a room..." Saya adds with a lower toned mumbling tone.

(Uddle? She means cuddle? My, could it be that she was grumpy before because she wanted to stay in the room, but could bring herself to say so after she dragged me downstairs?)

"I guess did." I respond as I walk up to her, then move a lock of pink hair behind her ear with my hand.

"H, humm. W, well. I guess, if you want to do this, this badly. I can let you. For a bit..." She adds as she keeps looking away, an obvious blush on her face.

(Let 'me' eh? Want to make it sound like you're doing me favor don't you. Chundere to the maximum.)

"Hmm, no. That won't do." I take a step back, Saya instantly darting her head to me.

"W, what's wrong. I said it's fine..." She responds with an almost disappointed voice.

"Well, I don't want to feel like you're doing this just for me. I'll admit that it's going to be a bit disappointing. But I'd rather wait until you feel comfortable with this." I answer as I lift my hands slightly, turning to look away. Mostly, because I was trying not to smirk...

"I, it's not like I feel uncomfortable with this. It's, fine, really..." Saya mumbles as she lowers her head...

I turned to look at the sulking pikette for a few seconds. Before I finally shook my head and walked up to Saya again. And with a quick pull, I wrapped my arms around her. Saya letting out a short yelp before turning silent again.

(You know. What Saya is missing in height, she gets in her front uhh 'assets'. Because I honestly can't fully hug her without squishing her breast on me...)

Saya then finally stopped acting like a pouty kid and unfolded her arms, grabbing on my shirt as she started grinding her forehead against my chest. She then lifted her head, and after looking at my face for a few seconds, she started glancing around.

"What?" I ask as I ruffle her hair.

"You're too tall..." She replies with a short whine.

(Or you're just too short.)

"Want to sit down?" I ask. Saya just nods.

"Uhh, well. I can't exactly walk right now..." I add as I tap her head.

"I'm not letting go..." Saya replies with a whine as she lets go of my shirt in order to hug me normally...

(Jee, our little spoiled princess. I 'was' aiming to head to the chair, but, uhh, fuck it. I can't pick her up like this and the bed is closer.)

And so, with Saya hugging me like an overzealous Koala that's bear hugging a tree on a hot summer day. I moved to the bed...

And. I know I said 'sit', but in the end I ended up about eighty percent lying with my back against the bed's headboard. Not unlike how I was with Saeko yesterday...

The moment we got relatively comfortable, Saya slid herself up towards my face, until her own face was in equal height to mine...

She then stared at me for a few seconds, switching her sight between my eyes, and, I think my lips?

"Umm. I,... umm" She stutters about as she lowers her head slightly, bringing her hands to her face to take off her glasses.

"T, this is going to be my first kiss..." She adds as she keeps looking down.

"Have you, already kissed Saeko?..." She then asks as she lifts her head to look at me, now without her glasses.

"Yes." I answer flatly.

(No point lying about this.)

"I, see. At least, you're being honest..." She adds as she glances away.

(Well, your other choices are Takashi, or Kohta. Kohta, in deference to the anime, has Asami now. And Takashi, even if you do manage to

get him now, he has more than just 'kissed' Rei.)

"Did you, do anything else to her?..." She asks again.

"Else?" I ask back.

"Y, you know..." She responds as she glances around with an obvious blush.

"S, she was not wearing any pants..." She adds as she keeps looking away.

"Uhh, no we didn't do anything 'else'. She took her pants off herself. That was not me, remember?" I answer as I sway my head from left to right...

"I, see..." Saya nods slightly, then turns to look at me.

"I'm, I'm going to let you have my first k,kiss. S, so be grateful!" She adds as she tries to take a serious expression, raising her voice in the end. Though with her face being the same color as her hair, her 'demanding' attitude reminded me more of an overzealous squirrel that has it's cheek pouches full of acorns...

(Don't chuckle, don't chuckle...)

I turned to look towards the window as I tried to hide my smirk...

"H,hey, look at me!" Saya whines as she shakes me slightly.

(Damn you're one pushy princess.)

I let out a deep breath before turning to look back at the pinkette. And after staring at her for a few seconds, her 'serious' frown turned meek again.

"W, well what are you waiting for..." Saya whines as she glances away.

I shake my head slightly and I pass my hand to the back of her neck. Saya quickly becoming tense as her eyes went slightly wide. Though, she did start 'pushing' her upper body against me...

"Saya, if you keep looking away from me, the only thing you're going to get. Is headpats." I say as I lightly pat her head. Saya turned to look at me with a slight pout in response.

"Idiot." She whines in a low tone.

"My, are you telling me you want an idiot to take your first kiss?" I 'ask' with a smirk. Saya, just blinks at me a couple of times...

"What no, I, it's just. You, are uhh you... muuuuuuuu...." She stumbles around her words before finally giving up, announcing her defeat with a vocalized pout as she narrowed her eyes at me.

"Well?" I 'ask' as I tilt my head.

"Fine, you are not an idiot..." She sighs as she leans her face slightly towards mine...

I lean my own face closer to hers in response. Until our lips touched for a few seconds, before pulling back up. Saya then lowered her head slightly, licking her lips slightly...

"Sometimes..." She adds in a low tone.

"Sometimes?" I ask as I tilt my head.

"You're not an idiot. Sometimes." She adds as she makes a slight one-sided smirk, her face still lowered.

(What she's snickering for? Does she think she just pulled a fast one on me? Heh, cute...)

"Well, guess a 'sometimes idiot' took your first kiss then." I chime as scratch the back of her neck.

"Hum, be grateful..." She adds she buries her face on my chest.

I just laughed through my nose slightly before turning to look out the window...

And, I kept looking out the window... Until, I realized 'what' I was staring at...

"Uhh, is that, a military transport plane? Or I'm seeing shit?" I ask as I keep looking at the window, a plane slowly descending towards the airport. Saya then lifts her head to also look outside...

"... You're, 'not', seeing shit. That, or I'm seeing the same shit as you are." She responds as she keeps looking through the window.

"Please don't say 'Shit' so much. It's unbecoming of a lady." I say with a half-smirk as I keep looking outside. Only to feel 'somebody' pinching my cheek seconds later.

"Idiot." Saya mumbles as she lets go of my cheek in order to wrap her arms around my waist. Placing her head against my chest.

(Why, do I get the feeling. That our 'break' just ended?...)

I sigh as I turn to look at the pinkette, hugging her as I rest my chin on her head...

(Hopefully, I'm just being paranoid...)

Break time's over

"UGGHHH! Come ON you stupiiiiiiiiid!" Saya exclaims with a loud groan as she keeps trying to turn the MP5's bolt head in order to lock it on the bolt carrier. The MP5 itself disassembled on the table, next to the closed laptop.

"Uhh, are you sure you don't want me to..."

"No! I can do iii-ah..." Saya cuts me off as she tries to push the whole carrier against her torso, causing the recoil spring to bend. And then slip the fingers. The whole carrier flying off her hands, and landing straight flat to my face...

"Oh crap! S, sorry!" Saya instantly shouts as I put my hand on my forehead.

"And that's why, you always need to wear head protection kids..." I respond as I rub my forehead, then lower my hand to look at my fingers...

(Oh? Tis was a critical hit.)

"Y, you're bleeding!" Saya gets off her chair and grabs my face, turning it to face her.

"Well, that thing did fly off pretty fast." I responded as I tapped the stinging point on my forehead.

"D, don't touch it!" Saya slaps my hand away from my forehead with a high pitched tone...

(Jeez mom...)

She then lets go of me and gets up, turning to head towards the bathroom.

"Don't touch it!" She exclaims right before entering the bathroom...

"It's just a scrape, why the freakout?..." I ask, pretty much myself.

Saya then exits the bathroom after a few seconds. Rubbing alcohol and a cotton ball in hand.

"Really now?" I ask as I tilt my head.

"We need to make sure it doesn't get infected. Don't be stupid." She answers as she walks up to me, then sits on the chair ahead of me.

"Uhh, if you put it like that." I shrug slightly and extend my arm. Saya glances at it, then looks back at my face.

"I'll do it, you can't see your forehead can you?" She responds as she ignores my hand, dousing a small part of the cotton ball with alcohol.

"Umm, tell me if it hurts..." She adds with a rather meek voice as she taps my forehead lightly.

(Uhh, well. It hurts as much as you'd expect from putting alcohol in an open wound.)

And like that, we turned silent...

(If I knew that this would end up with casualties. I'd have picked a different way to pass the time when I had the chance. While I did not mind just sitting on the bed with her, she wanted to 'finish' her lessons on the gun. So, of course after she ended up writing all the stuff I told her in a new textbook she found in here. She wanted to 'try' them out on the gun...)

I switch my glance towards the window.

(Also, I have been seeing helicopters flying over the airport's sky for some time now. 'Something' is definitely up over there...)

"Sorry..." Saya whispers...

"Crap happens, don't sweat it." I answer as I shrug my shoulders.

"That's, a stupid excuse people make in order to justify their stupid decisions..." She frowns slightly as she presses the cotton ball on my forehead.

"Huh? My, it sounds as if you almost 'want' me to ask for compensation..." I respond as I make a slight smirk, arching one eyebrow up.

"D, don't be ridiculous. Why would I want you to do anything weird to me..." She glances at me before looking away, ending her sentence with a low tone mumble.

"Hm? I'm pretty sure I didn't say about doing anything 'weird' to you. Or, you actually want me to?" I 'ask' as I narrow my eyes slightly, smirk still on my face.

"I, I do not! P, pervert! Leecher!" Saya blurts back with a blushing face, twisting the cotton ball on my forehead.

"Oi!" I tilt my upper body back to avoid Saya's hand.

Saya, on the other hand. Tilted her own body forward, to the point that she actually got off her chair while she kept trying to keep the cotton ball on my forehead. I think, she was also smirking slightly?

"You enjoying this?" I ask as I frown.

"W, what makes you think that?" She answers, the smirk becoming a full-blown grin now...

(Ok, you asked for it miss Saeko mk2.)

"Oh, look." I then bring my hands to her sides, and squeeze, hard. Saya's eyes going wide as she tenses up.

"AAAAA! S, stop, stop stop stop. A, aih!" She squeals as starts squirming about, bringing both her hands to my arms as she tries to pry them off her sides. With little to no success...

She then decides to 'counterattack' by trying to do the exact same thing to me. Causing me to lean back even more. To the point that the chair, which was already on its two back legs, ended up giving way. Sending me falling backward, with Saya pretty much falling on top of me. And then, the world turned dark...

"Huhhh? Whu turnd uff thue lieghtss?" I ask with a muffled voice.

"Ahh! D, don't speak you idiot!" I hear Saya respond with a soft moan from right on top of me...

(... Let me guess. That thing blocking my sight, is her chest. Uhh, cliché city much? O well, tis time for some payback...)

"Whuaaaat?" I 'ask'. Purposefully dragging out the 'A' in my question.

"A,hha, I, I'm going to punch you if you keep doing this you pervert!" Saya responds with a short yelp.

"Thuen guet uff?" I answer back.

"M, my legs are tangled on the chair! A, AND STOP SPEAKING DAMMIT!" Saya shouts as I felt the 'something' press up against my face...

And a few seconds later. I got my light back as Saya got off me, sitting next to me with a face equal to the color of a tomato...

I shook my head slightly and started to also get up in order to sit. While, in the meantime.

"Stupid! Pervert! Stupid! Pervert!" Saya shouted as she closed her eyes and started throwing a barrage of 'slaps' towards me. Though, most of them felt like pats to be honest, and it didn't really stop me from getting my back off the ground...

She then turned her upper body away from me as she covered her breasts. Or well, she tried too. You know, they are kind of, giant...

"You were doing this on purpose, weren't you..." She whines as she turns her head to me with a pout. A couple of hair locks slightly covering one side of her face.

"Me? Absolutely not." I respond as I chuckle.

"Hum, that's what I get for trying to take care of you." Saya huffs as she gets up, dusting herself off.

"You mean for trying to drill a hole in my skull." I add as I also get up.

"That's your fault for being a pervert." Saya retorts.

"Huuuuh, keep calling me a pervert. And I might actually become one..." I respond back as I lift my hands to chest height and start wiggling my fingers. Saya turning to stare at my hands as her eyes went slightly wide. Tightening her hands around her chest as a heavy blush appeared on her face. And, she stayed like that, intensely staring at my hands...

"Uhh, Why are you staring at my hands so hard for Saya?" I ask as I tilt my head.

"Huh, uhh, what?" She shakes her head as if snapping out of something, then turns to look at me with a blank expression.

"What? Daydreaming about something?" I 'ask' as I smirk. Saya blinks a couple of times before glancing around as she clears her throat.

"L, let's re-assemble the gun!" She squeaks as she picks up the gun's bolt, then walks up to her chair, plopping on it before leaving the bolt on the table...

(Weee, Saya just changed the subject.)

"Want me to re-attach the bolt head?" I ask as I also get up. Saya just nods silently.

(You know we could have avoided all this if you just nodded the first time around. Not, that I really mind. Call me a pervert all you like, but I regret nothing.)

I walk up to the table and take the gun part, twisting the bolt head on the bolt until it 'clicked'. Then give it to Saya.

"Stupid bolt is misogynistic..." Saya whines as she takes it. Looking rather displeased with how easily I attached it back on.

"Saya, nobody's perfect at everything. Not being able to reassemble a gun doesn't make you useless." I respond, Saya glancing at me for a few seconds before focusing back on the gun...

"And what else can I do then?" She asks as she keeps looking at the gun.

"Things you're good at, information, research, support. Behind the lines work is as important as front line work." I answer. Saya, just keeps staring at the gun...

(Uhh, let's drop it for now...)

"You remember the rest?" I ask, Saya just nods and starts putting the gun back together...

"This... stupid... can't even ask... reward now... waste of... time" Saya adds with an annoyed whisper...

"What?" I ask as I lean slightly towards her.

"N, nothing. D, don't speak, you're breaking my concentration..." Saya responds as she glances at me with a slight blush...

And so, Saya started reassembling the gun.

(Ok, let's just leave her to do this at her own pace...)

That, was my initial thought at least. As after about a minute had passed, somebody knocked on our door...

"Miss Takagi? Your father has asked that everybody comes downstairs as fast as possible." A male voice speaks up.

I turn to look at Saya, and Saya turns to look at me.

"Uhh, Ok!" Saya responds with a loud voice. And then, silence...

"You think this has to do with the plane that landed some time ago?" I ask as I fold my arms.

"Most possibly, yea." Saya nods as she finishes reassembling the gun.

"Well, in that case, let's clean up and head off." I add as I turn to head towards the bathroom. Saya followed behind me shortly after.

Once inside, I open the hot water on the sink...

"Uhhh, it's weird how every time I use hot water, it reminds me that the world has gone to shit." I say nonchalantly as I wash my hands after. Saya just nodded, though her face looked like she was not really 'there' as she fixed her hair into her signature twintails...

"Uhh, Saya?" I ask as I look at her through the mirror. She keeps her head lowered as she finishes her hair.

"We, probably won't have a lot of time for ourselves now..." She mumbles. Slightly tugging the sleeve of my shirt.

"So, can I. Have another umm. K, kiss?..." Asks as she lifts her head to look at me through the mirror.

"What? So, you mean I won't get to do 'this' now?" I ask to put my hand a little over her waist, and squeeze.

"H, hey!" Saya bends away from me as she throws a few quick slaps on my hand. Then turns to look at my face with a slight pout.

"I asked for a kiss, not to get groped." She narrows her eyes at me as she leans her head towards me, folding her arms in the process.

"Huh? That didn't even count as groping though." I respond as I raise an eyebrow.

"It did for me. So now I demand that you kiss me twice as compensation for feeling me up." She retorts as she narrows her eyes, pursing her lips slightly.

(Holy crap, she's actually haggling?)

"So, If I kiss you three times, I can grope more?" I ask as I put my finger under my chin and turn look sideways, as if I'm thinking.

"S, stop saying grope. You sound like an old pervert." She answers as she frowns.

"Huh, I evolved from pervert to old pervert?" I 'ask' as I turn to look at her.

"More like devolved." Saya answers with a smug look as she smirks.

"Devolved? Uhh, you know you'll be kissing a caveman very soon if you start devolving me for every little thing Saya..." I respond as I arch an eyebrow and tilt my head...

Saya looks at me for a few seconds, then puts her hand over her mouth.

"Pfft!..." She then starts trying to hold herself from laughing. Without much success...

"O,k? Didn't think it was 'that' funny, but..." I fold my arms as I frown slightly, Saya responds by waving my free arm while hunching over, her other hand still over her mouth.

"N, no. It's just..." She takes a deep breath and lifts her head to look at me...

"Pffftt!" Only to hunch over again...

"S, sorry. Sorry". She waves her arm again while still being hunched over...

"But, I now can't stop imagining you with rough, puffed up caveman hair while still wearing that stupid mask of yours..." She adds as she lifts her head to look at me...

"Pffftthehehaahahah!" And, she started actually laughing this time around...

(... Uhh. Can you get high on gunpowder and grease? Because I have no idea how she can laugh so hard from this...)

I kept looking at Saya as she was starting to actually tear up...

(Oh well, at least she's having. 'Fun'?)

I take a deep breath through my nose, then let it out..

Saya, after laughing her ass off for almost a minute. Starts to finally calm down...

"Well, I still got no idea how the hell you found this so funny..." I say as Saya takes a few deep breaths.

"S, sorry. It just, caught me by surprise. I didn't expect to see that image in my head, it caught me off guard..." Saya responds as she wipes her eyes, still giggling occasionally.

"Oh well. I had yet to see you laugh so hard, so I guess it was worth it." I respond as I shrug slightly.

"Hum, just don't think that this paid off what you 'owe' me." Saya quickly remarks as she reverts back to her smug look, placing her hands on her hips as she narrowed her eyes.

(Damn, she bounced back fast...)

"Oh, woe is me. Guess there's nothing I can do, but pay my dues..." I respond with a dramatic tone as I sit on the bathtub's outer wall...

"Hummm, ahh well. If it's that much of a painful experience for you, then I won't force you. I would rather you be, comfortable." She responds as she smirks at me, the tone of her voice taking an obviously sarcastic 'caring' tone.

"Heh? Now where have I heard that one before? O right. Somebody wanted cuddles." I respond as I make a one-sided smirk at her.

"That was that, this is this." Saya quickly responds as she leans even closer to me, smirk still on her face...

(Hmm? Going for a full-blown attack here, are we not? Very well, let's see how 'long' you can keep up that 'tough' attitude my dear girl...)

I get up, and walk towards the bathroom door.

"Hey! Where do you think you're going!" She raises her voice as I hear footsteps closing in behind me...

"So, you want payment?" I 'ask' as I open the door.

"Then, you get payment." I respond as I turn to face her.

"Huh, what are you acting all smuaaaaAAA!" Before she could even finish her sentence, I walked up to her, and picked her up, princess style.

"Aaaa, uwahauwa..." She mumbles as she freezes in my hands, her eyes wide open.

"All the payment." I say as I walk up to the bed, and drop her on it, causing her to bounce on it a couple of times. Saya still wide-eyed, frozen like a deer in front of headlights from my sudden action.

"A, I aaaa..." Saya just kept mumbling with her mouth half-open as she stared at me. She didn't try to move, not even after I sat on top of her...

I then lowered my face, until it was right over hers.

"Weeeelllll?" I 'ask' as I make a one-sided smirk at her. Saya just, kept staring. I think she had forgotten how to blink...

And seeing that she just kept looking at me like a fish, I proceeded to 'pay' her without waiting for her reply. In other words, she now could not speak, even if she wanted to...

After a couple of seconds. I pull my head back. Saya, with her eyes closed now, tried to follow my head as she lifted hers, before opening her eyes and letting her head drop back down.

"You said you wanted two, right?" I 'ask' as I lean my head towards her again.

"W, wait!" She explained.

"Hmm?" I just tilt my head as I stop.

"Umm, me on top now..." She mumbles as she lowers her head slightly.

"Hummmmmmm." I take a long pause as I narrow my eyes.

"Request..." I sway my head slightly from left to right.

"Denied." I add as I bring my head down again.

"Wauhumhmm!" Saya's what would have been complaint, ended up turning into a muffled whine. And, while I did feel that she kicked the

bed a couple of times from the way it started shaking, she didn't even try to use her hands to get me off her...

And again, after a few seconds, I lift my head. Saya staring at me with a visibly bated breath.

"T, that one didn't count." She speaks up with a whiny voice.

"Is that so?" I ask.

"It's supposed to be my payment. I wanted to be on top..." Saya whines as she glances away from me with a slight pout.

"Too late. That's what I had, that's what you get..." I respond as I poke her cheek.

Saya just lets out a displeased whine as she keeps looking away.

"F, fine..." She adds with the same whiny tone.

"Can you get off me now? We need to go downstairs..." She adds...

"Uhh, yeah sure." I respond, and move to get off her...

And, in retrospect. I should have expected this. But, yea. Let's just say that I was not really thinking right now. And as I was about halfway off her, Saya quickly sprang up and 'bumped' into me. Causing me to lose my balance and end up with my back on the bed, Saya now on top of me. As in, sprawled completely on top of me...

"... Really now?" I ask as I lift my head to look down at her. She just kept blinking at me as she kept her chin on my chest.

"I said I wanted to be on top." She responds without moving her head.

She then slid up until her face was over mine. And, as she closed her eyes and she started to lower her head...

"Hey, are you two ready? We really need to go." A female voice speaks up from the other side of the door...

Saya stops lowering her head. And with her eyes still closed, one of her eyebrows started to twitch.

"Muuughhh! Yes one second!" She shouts as she slams her legs on the bed. She then lets out a long sigh as she lowers her head to my collar bone...

"Not fair. My moment is ruined now..." She whines as she keeps her head lowered.

" And that means that you still owe me one now." She adds as she lifts her head, then finally gets off me, and then off the bed. Quickly walking up to her jacket and shoes.

(... Ok, it definitely did not take her 'too long' before she started acting like herself again...)

I also get up, then head to wear my boots.

(Jacket, gun, vest and mask, are in the other room.)

"I'll head to my room to get my other stuff." I say as I glance at Saya, she just nods at me.

And so, I open the door. Only to come face to face with Saeko. My jacket folded in her arms, and on top of it, the vest, mask and Scar-H.

"I, hope you do not mind. I took the liberty of bringing these to you." Saeko speaks up as she shows me my stuff.

(... I'm, never going to stop feeling guilty every time something like this happens, am I?...)

"No, I was actually about to get them. So, thank you." I respond as I take the things. Saeko just smiles at me as she tilts her head slightly.

With that, I get 'dressed' on the spot. And by the time I was done, so was Saya.

"Let's go?" I ask as I look at Saeko, then at Saya. And with a small nod, the three of us started going down the stairs...

"Wonder what Papa wants from us..." Saya asks a 'question' that obviously nobody around could answer.

And, after a few minutes of going down the stairs...

"Oh and. It's still, 'my' day is it not?" Saya 'asks' as she gets closer to me, then grabs my arm and hugs it, effectively shoving it between her chest. And, seeing how she was constantly glancing at Saeko with a smirk. I think I had a pretty good idea 'what' she was trying to do.

"Saya, I would like that you refrain from trying to make 'somebody' upset on purpose..." I glance at the pinkette as I speak up. She just frowns, and lets go of my arm with a pout...

"Hum. Another guy would 'beg' that I don't let go of their arm." Saya whispers with the same pout.

(... Did, she just pull the 'another guy would' on me?)

"Well. Since I know that leading you both at the same times is not a 'nice' thing to do. If you 'do' find somebody that you prefer over me. Then I promise not to be 'too' salty about it." I respond as I keep looking down the stairs. Saya just turns to look at me with a stupefied expression.

"I would also do my very best to support that decision, should you make it." Saeko adds as she leans her body forward in order to look at Saya, a smile on her face.

"H, hum. Why don't 'you' find somebody else instead? I'm sure that compared to this idiot, there are people out there that match your

'style' way more." Saya replies with a sarcastic quip.

(The what now?)

"With that line of thinking. Won't you be able to find somebody matching your standing more as well? I mean, Naier is just a measly peasant compared to you." Saeko responds as she narrows her eyes slightly, the smile still on her face.

(... Peasant? What? Uhh, now they're just dishing me...)

"But you ain't much of a peasant yourself Saeko. You ARE a Bushijima after all. Your father is pretty well known." Saya replies...

(... They're, not wrong though. Compared to me, they 'are' royalty...)

"In other words, you're both way outa my league. Maybe, I should do as a peasant does, and hang with other peasants, like Hito..."

"No." Both of them cut me off at about the same time...

(... And now they're just ganging up on me...)

"Then how about you stop throwing jabs at each?" I 'ask'.

"And I wonder who's fault is that in the first place." Saya answers as she narrows her eyes at me.

"Fine, then throw jabs at me. Just stop trying to claw each other out. It'll be less painful." I say as I turn to glance at her. She just stares at me for a few seconds, before turning to look ahead with a slight huff.

"Smooth talking idiot..." She mumbles as she pouts.

"Hmmm, so I can 'Jab' you if I want to?" Saeko 'asks'...

(... Why do I suddenly feel like I'm in danger?...)

"L, let's just go to the bottom floor..." I respond, deciding not to answer Saeko's question. Instead, I just picked up the pace while going down the stairs, Saeko letting out a small giggle in response...

It didn't take too long after that, until we reached the bottom floor...

"Looks like we are not too late." I say as I look at a large group of Souichiro's men that were already waiting inside the entrance room. The man himself was also there, along with his wife, aka Saya's mother...

The moment Saya spotted her dad, she trotted up to him, me and Saeko following behind.

"Papa? What's going on?" She asks after he also turned to look at her.

"The airport has been secured, we're moving most of our forces there. This building will now act as an outpost for when teams will be moving deeper inland." Souichiro responds, then turns to look at me.

"I hope you managed to rest. The army has sent reinforcements here, meaning that break time is over." He adds as he folds his arms.

"Follow me, I will explain what is what while we head to the airport." He motions with his hand as he turns around. And after he exited the building, he went straight towards a black four doored jeep. Not unlike the ones that he used when he went to the power station before the emp blast.

Yuriko entered the driver's seat, Saya the front passengers, I Souichiro and Saeko entered the back seats. With me in the middle, Saeko to my right, and the big boss man to my left. Why he decided to sit back and Saya to the front, I don't know. I don't 'want' to know.

And after Saya's mother started the car and began driving towards the airport, Souichiro spoke up.

"There are two main points we need to talk about. One, is about to happen now. The second one, is going to happen when it is." He said with a stern voice as he spoke up.

(Oh great, now we're getting multi-sectioned quests too...)

"First, a team will soon scout the surrounding location via helicopter. Now that we have a foothold on the mainland, we need to know the points of interest that will help us. Nearby army checkpoints, the condition of the nearby power plants, hospitals, gas stations, and easily defendable locations. Things that we can use to progress forward. As right now, this airport is the only real base we have." Souichiro closes his eyes as he keeps speaking.

"Naier, didn't the empty island we found have an underwater tunnel that connected to the mainland? The one that you 'blew up'?" Saeko asks, Souichiro turning to look at her.

"Hmm, yea. But I don't know if cleaning all the rubble there is possible without heavy machinery." I add, then turn to Souichiro.

"As Saeko mentioned. We found an island that was spared from the emp. I don't know if it has anything of use, as all we found there was a small hut. It 'might' have something important, like a communication tower or something as we didn't get to explore all of it. Also, the underground tunnel, but as she mentioned, it's caved in." I add as I keep looking at Saya's dad. Who after thinking for a few seconds, nodded.

"Very well, if you know the location. On your return, guide the pilot to pass over the island. If it proves to be worth the effort, then we will act from there." Souichiro responds.

(So, just flying around in a heli. Could be worse...)

"Now the second thing I will need you for. Is being a lookout." He adds...

(... whut?)

Seeing that I didn't respond, he continued...

"The mercenaries you mentioned. Apparently they have been 'active' ever since the outbreak started. One of the new generals that arrived informed me that he also had a couple of his outposts 'go dark' because of 'heavily armed foreigners'. " Souichiro turns to look towards the front windshield. The airport's field slowly becoming visible, along with three military transport planes sprawled across said field.

(Huh, I saw only 'one' plane land. And that, is...)

Deeper into the ocean, a single aircraft carrier. Helicopters flying from, and to it.

(And that explains why I kept seeing them rocket mounted mosquitoes...)

"You and a team of your choice will be keeping a lookout from a boat in open water, we will be joining the rest of the military in an operation to flush the mercenaries out. You will be one of the lookouts at the main dock. That operation, as I said, will happen when it happens." Souichiro just kept speaking while I was looking at the 'toys' the army reinforcements brought along with them...

"Any questions?" He then asks.

"Why don't we just drive a tank around and blow everything to bits?" I 'ask' as I turn to him.

"Because one, we don't have any tanks, or heavy infantry weapons for that matter. Second, a lot of the infected are inside buildings. Buildings that we need intact. The more damage we cause to the already unsteady infrastructure of the city, the harder it will be to recover if something goes wrong down the road." Souichiro answers with a serious expression.

(I was half-joking. But uhh. I guess that's an answer...)

"I, have never been in a helicopter before..." Saeko then speaks up.

"I'll have to disappoint you Busujima. Naier will be going by himself. The helicopter is already full." Souichiro responds, causing both Saeko and Saya to turn and stare at him...

"Then why are you sending him and not somebody else?" Saya asks. Though it felt more than a complaint rather than a question.

"Some members of the recon team asked me to send him." He responds flatly...

(... Who, did what now? The only people I worked with here are... oh, boy...)

As if she was thinking the same thing I was, Saya turned to stare at me, puffing her cheeks slightly as she narrowed her eyes.

"And, Busujima. There's something else you need to know." Souichiro then turns to look at Saeko.

"Your father is here." He adds plainly...

(... WHUT?)

"My, father?" Saeko asks as she blinks blankly at Souichiro.

"Yes, from what he told me, one of the people in the overseas self-defense conference he was at was a military official. He returned with him." Souichiro responds...

(Saeko's, dad? Uhhh. How fast can I get into that heli and fly to the other side of the continent?...)

"Is he at the airport right now?" Saeko asks back.

"Yes, he will be waiting for us by the helicopter." Souichiro answers...

(... Is this a good time to freak out? I want to freak out. Can I freak out? I'm gonna freak out...)

I just, kept staring straight ahead through the windshield...

Untill, I felt something squeezing my right hand. Turning to it, I see Saeko's hand, and Saeko herself, staring at me.

"If it would not be too much trouble. Could I ask that you let me introduce you to him before you go?" She asks with a calm, soft tone...

"Sure..." I respond with the most deadpan tone I could muster, keeping my head straight towards the windshield. Not even daring to look to my left, where Souichiro was sitting at...

Saya on the other hand, was staring at me with a shit-eating grin...

(... Ohhh grinning aren't we? I should have slapped your damn ass when I had the chance...)

"Oh, papa, can I ask you something?" Saya then turns to look towards her father.

"Can I stay at the receiving end of the comms? I want to note down the information Naier will find." She asks right after. Souichiro turns to look at his daughter, then nods.

And so, Saya's mother drove down the field, towards the communications tower...

Until. I could see a Black hawk type helicopter appearing behind the tower itself, rotors already spinning. Next to that helicopter. Rika, the red armband dude, and three soldiers that I could not recall meeting. Most important of all though...

A man in a black kimono, the Haori jacket and Hakama he was wearing over it proving that he was of 'high' social standing...

Once we got close, the car stopped. And the moment we opened the door, the muffled sound of the chopper's blades I was hearing up until now, got cracked up to eleven. Not that it mattered though...

As now that we were closer, I could make out the man's features. Gray hair that he had tied up to a small braid behind his head, a couple of visible wrinkles on his angular face. Along with a set of two, relatively thick eyebrows, followed by an even thicker mustache...

(IT'S FRIGGING SILVER-FANG FROM ONE PUNCH MAN?! But with longer hair. BUT IT'S FRIGGING SILVER-FANG FROM ONE PUNCH MAN?! Ohhh man, I'm so fucking dead...)

I could not really see if the guy was actually ripped or not because of the clothing. But, even from his stance. I could see that the guy was not just a flimsy old dude.

"Father..." Saeko then walks up to the man, and makes a deep bow...

"It lightens my heart to see that you are still alive and well, Saeko." The old man replies, his face not showing any change in emotion.

"Thank you father. I am glad to see that you are safe as well." Saeko replies as she lifts herself from her bow.

(... Damn, that was, stiff as hell...)

Saeko's father then turns to look towards Souichiro. Who, upon seeing that the old man was looking at him, bowed.

"Mister Takagi, don't let me hold you. I expect you must have a lot on your shoulders right now." Souichiro lifts himself and nods, then turns to walk towards the tower. His wife following behind him.

"Saya. You wanted to be on the other side of communications. Then Come." He says as he glances towards his daughter.

"Y, yes!" Saya answers back loudly as she quickly trots towards her father, all three of them turning to continue towards the comms tower.

In other words. It was now Saeko, her father, and me. With me being a little further off...

"And you are?" Saeko's father asks as he turns his sight to me. Probably because I was the only one left around, and was still standing there like a fucking idiot...

"Ah, father..." Saeko then turns to me, and starts staring at me. I let out a small, silent sigh, and walked up next to her.

(I feel like I'm about to get executed.)

"This is Naier Sepfier. He is the man that led us, after this whole situation began. It is only thanks to him, that I am still alive today." She then speaks again, throwing a short glance towards me.

(Huuuuhhhhhh, no pressure. Also, didn't Takashi 'lead' us up to the point of the split?...)

The old man turns to stare at me for a few seconds.

"I see." And then, bows?...

"Thank you for taking care of my daughter in my absence." He responds as he lifts himself back to a normal posture. He then glances at the people by the helicopter, who were all looking toward us...

"But it would seem that there are people waiting for you. You should go." Saeko's father keeps looking at the helicopter before looking back at me.

"You can tell me what you want when it's just the two of us, can you not?" He then asks as he turns toward his daughter.

"Of course." Saeko replies as she nods, before turning to look at me.

"I will wait until you return. Be careful." She adds as she keeps gazing at me. I just nod slightly before turning to leave...

(I just got out of this, without saying a single word...)

The moment the people by the helicopter saw me running towards them, they started getting on the Black hawk. With me also entering the main cabin shortly after, sitting on the seat by the edge, as all the other ones were already taken.

"Why every time I see you, you're around some scary people?" Rika 'asks' as she laughs lightly through her nose.

"Were all in, let's go!" One of the 'new' soldiers shouts. The pilots, who were looking towards the main cabin, nod and turn to focus on, you know, flying...

And as the helicopter started to rise. Causing Saeko's hair to flutter widely behind her. I raised my hand, slightly waving at her. She responded by doing the same, before lowering her hand a few seconds later, her sight still locked towards me as she started to become smaller and smaller. Until, the helicopter tilted forward, and the airport slowly got taken over by a smoking city.

"Hey, here." Rika then extended her arm towards me, a headset in her hand. I nod, and take it.

(Uhhhh, ok so. Saeko's dad, is fucking Silver Fang. Let's just hope he can't 'Water Stream Rock Smashing Fist' too. Or I'm gonna have more chances surviving if I just jump off the heli right here and now. Without a parachute)

Sightseeing

(Well, glad I'm up here and not down there right now. Or back at the airport for that matter. I was NOT ready for Saeko's 'kun-fu master' dad. But, anyway, focus on the task at hand Naier.)

Right now, the helicopter had come to a full stop over a gas station. A point we decided to check as it was very close to the airport.

"Looks intact." A soldier with binoculars, that was sitting on the other corner of the cabin, speaks up.

"It also looks like a fort made out of cars." A soldier with a medical cross armband, who was sitting in the opposite direction of the binoculars one, answers as he keeps looking down the open helicopter's door that was next to him.

"Getting there with all the cars will be pure bullshit for whoever has to go there by foot." The third soldier, who was by the mounted machine gun in the middle adds.

"What if they use a heli to zipline down on the roof on top of the dispensers?" The medic asks.

"The noise will be too much, everything will be onto the team by the time they get down. Even if the helicopter leaves afterward, half a side will still be heading straight towards them. And a gunfight in the middle of a gas station, will probably end up in fireworks. Add that this greatly limits how much fuel we can actually take back. Add the fuel for the helicopter, and we might actually lose in total with that method." Rika, who was sitting ahead of me, speaks up as she turns to look at the soldiers.

"Saya, you see the helicopter's tracker?" I ask as I tap the microphone that was over my mouth.

"Yea, want me to note the location down?" A voice in my headphones asks. Well, the truth is that 'everything' up until now was a voice in my headphones. Because, helicopters are insanely fucking loud.

"Yea, gas station, though getting to it might be a problem. Add it as a secondary option." I answer. And Saya responded with a 'm'hm'.

"And uhh. Are you sure you want to keep your channel locked on mine? The others could say something you might wanna hear." I add as I keep speaking.

"You can just say it to me if that's the case, can you not?..." Saya answers...

(When she said that she wanted to be on the other side of the comms to see what 'I'll' find. I didn't realize she meant it word for word. Because now, I sort of have my personal 'operator'...)

"Nahh, it's probably better like this. Or dumbos right here might start going all creepy on her." The medic then speaks up as he turns to me, pointing at the machine gun dude in the center. Because, while the rest could not hear Saya, they could hear me...

"Oi, fuck you." The guy by the gun groans.

"I don't even know how the chick looks." He adds right after...

(So if she looks nice, you 'will' go all creepo on her? Yea, better she stays on a private channel then. Because she looks more than 'nice', for me at least...)

"Should I move on?" The right pilot in the cockpit then asks.

"Yea, keep going." The armband dude, who was in the middle of the cabin responds. And the helicopter starts tilting forward.

"We'll go in a circular motion around the airport. Starting from the right, and head to the left. We'll return to base after we hit the sea."

The right pilot adds before he focuses back on flying the heli.

(Huh, speaking of the sea, I 'think' I saw the island with the underwater tunnel while we were coming here. But that's, for later.)

"Where're we going next?" The medic asks.

"Power plant." The right pilot responds.

"Uhh, it's not a nuclear one I hope?" I add as I lean to look towards the pilots.

"No, this town has no nuclear power plants, neither do any of the neighboring cities. Partly why command is so adamant that we take it back without turning it into a wasteland." The left pilot speaks up.

"Power plants do have fail-safes in case of a catastrophe. But everything 'can' fail. And a melting down nuclear power plant? A big no-no." The same pilot adds.

"Aight. So, keep eyes open for anything down the road?" I ask as I turn to look back out the open door, the left pilot letting out a 'yep' in response.

And with that, the muffled sound of the helicopter's spinning rotor blades overtook any silence that was about to issue...

(The city seems so calm from up here. A striking contrast from how it would feel if I was actually down there right now...)

This silence went on for some time, until...

"Hey, we have wavers to our left." The left pilot speaks up.

(Wavers?...)

I tilt my head as I frown. Yet, before I could ask, we flew over a small office building. A giant 'SOS' sign made of bags, wooden planks,

tables and sheets. Several people waving frantically towards the helicopter as it passed over them.

(Oh, that's what he means. Waving people...)

"Isn't this a bit insulting? Calling them wavers I mean." I 'ask'. The left pilot letting out a sigh in response.

"Don't get me wrong kid, I feel for the ones that are stuck down there. But I can't stop and pick up every single survivor that jumps out and demands that I land this bird in order to pick them up." He continues.

"And we don't get sent out here to stroll about, flying these things is expensive, especially now that resources are scarce. If I was tasked to go to point B and do thing D. Then stopping at point C to pick a couple of people in order to return them to point A. Is both time-consuming, resource-consuming, and will probably mean I might not be able to complete the task D I was given in time. Which can end with more dead lives compared to the ones I saved by not doing what I was asked of." The right pilot adds right after.

"Uhh, at least they ain't shooting homing missiles at us. Because I get the feeling they might take this personally..." I add with a monotonous tone as I turned to look towards the building, the people on it slowly letting their arms drop as we quickly picked up distance from them.

"Eat your damn tongue, last thing I need in my life right now is a helicopter crash." The binoculars soldier scoffs...

(Huh, who 'is' wrong here though? The survivors that think that the people here just don't care, or the people here that have been tasked with something to do? And as things are unstable as fuck, I don't think insubordination will be treated lightly right now. And, he is not wrong. The reason they are out here is to, plainly put, ensure that the safe zones we have don't end up a smoldering wreck. Ammunition, food, power. All these things can get 'used'. And once

they run out, it'll be chaos. Especially if you have a couple of self-entitled people sitting in their tents, thinking that they deserve everything given to them without them giving anything back.)

I shake my head and turn to look back towards the way the helicopter was flying at.

"We can't save everybody Naier. You said so yourself." Saya then speaks up.

"Never said we 'should' save them, I know that. Just don't see the point of adding insult to injury. Not, that it really matters if we are being insulting or not. I get the feeling that these people would gladly break our legs and leave us for dead right now." I answer to Saya.

"So it's fine if I call them wavers, right?" The left pilot 'asks' with a small chuckle. I just let a small breath through my nose as I shake my head lightly once again...

(Well, people are going to be peo... Oh?)

I stop mid thought as I spot a relatively flashy looking building in the distance. Flashy in the sense that it was much bigger than the ones around it, and had a big wide white 'board' on top of the building's entrance, looking pretty much like a billboard. Except, it had several black letters on it instead of an image...

(... The hell is this?...)

As we got closer, I started to make out the things written on the board...

(Beany bean and the beanie bin. Premiere 16:00 - 18:00.

Why did you spend so much time on a frigging bat. 18:30- 20:30

Unoriginal cannon 4 Unoriginality strikes back, again. 21:00 - 23:00

The Nervous lost puppy and the Swagging machine. 23.30 - 1.30...

... Uhh. A cinema?...)

And just as we flew over it.

"Wait, stop for a second." I speak up as I wave my arm, keeping my sight locked on the building.

"What's up?" Rika tilts her head as she turns to look out as well.

"Saya, got my location?" I ask.

"Yes, found something?" She asks back.

"Yea, cinema." I respond.

"... Uhh, what?" I hear her answer back with a confused tone.

"I found, a cinema." I responded again.

"I don't think it's the right time for movies Naier." Saya answers with a slight groan.

"Aww, want to take your girlfriend to the movies?" The machine gun soldier 'asks' as he turns to me with a shit-eating smirk.

"No, and no. Well the second might be a yes. But no." I respond as I turn to the machine gun dude. Saya letting out a rather confused, 'uhhh?' after my answer.

"No, I want you to mark the cinema. Because in there, I can go into a room, scream my lungs out, and nobody other than the people in that room can hear. Didn't you ever wonder why you couldn't hear the movies playing right next door to you when they were going full blast?" I ask. Saya, after a couple of seconds, lets out an enlightened 'Ahh!'

"Soundproof rooms!" She adds with a loud voice.

"Yea, soundproof rooms." I add, in order for the rest to hear as well.

"While the army seems capable of holding back the corpses, having this place as an outpost can help. It won't need a lot in terms of corpse defense. Plus, we could place any 'loud' machinery in there without worrying about them attracting hordes day in, day out. Like generators for example." I keep speaking as I turn to look back outside.

"Alright, noted." Saya responds a couple of seconds later.

"Ok, we're good. Let's keep going." I nod slightly as I raise my hand. The left pilot nods back, then motions to the right one. And the helicopter tilts forward once again...

(Huh, wonder what type of movies Saya and Saeko used to watch...)

With that thought, I kept looking down as we zoomed past streets and houses...

And, as we moved deeper inland, I started to see the town degrade. At a rather alarming pace too. Streets started to turn more chaotic. Houses, more often than not being with partly collapsed sections.

"Looks like a damn warzone down there..." I mutter as I keep looking below us.

"The Yakuza was relatively active in this location, not surprised this place turned into a wreck. Be it that they tried to defend themselves, or that they tried to take advantage of the situation." The medic responded as he also looked below us, narrowing his eyes slightly.

"So we 'are' trying to get blown out of the sky." I add with a half-joking tone.

"This location has turned into a wasteland, don't think anybody that's capable of using such guns is left here." The right pilot responds.

(So you're just winging it? Ain't that a bit 'too' reckless?)

"Well, don't think we'll find any structures that will be of use around here. Everything's a pile of rubble." And with a shrug, I focus back on looking outside.

"Uhh. Can I ask why you keep mentioning that you will be getting blown out of the sky?" I hear Saya ask.

"Uhh. A giant ass zombie with a rocket launcher is chasing S.T.A.R.Z around here." I answer with the most deadpan voice I can muster. Causing even Rika to look at me funny...

"... What?..." Was all I got from a confused Saya...

"Ughh, Naier this is important. Don't goof around." She adds right after with a serious tone.

"Jee, way to be a stick in the mud. We are flying over a location where the Yakuza was active." I answer as I let out a sigh through my nose.

"You're a stick in the mud!" Saya shouts back.

... and seconds later...

"Uhh, ahh. S, sorry Papa. I'll be more quiet." She adds with a much more hushed tone...

(Ouuuhh, buuurned.)

"Just, you wait until you return idiot. I will get you back for this..." Saya hisses.

(... I have, so many comebacks for this, but they will definitely make her shout again. Let's not make her day harder. For now.)

"Why are you so mad anyway. Stick in the mud can be considered a compliment. The stick is unique, different from everybody else." I 'answer' back.

"You, are an idiot." And got an original response from Saya.

"Only on days that I'm flying in a Blackhawk helicopter." I retort back...

"Umm, ok. You really make me want to join your little chat. Tell your cute little friend to open her channel." Rika then speaks up as she leans towards me.

"Cuuute? I agree, open the channel." The machine gun man speaks up right after as he turns to me with a stupid grin.

"Ok, just because 'you' asked in such a creepy way. I'm telling her to add extra encryption." I respond as I point at the machine gun man.

"Aww man come on, she can at least introduce me to some of her friends~." He retorts as he exaggeratedly raises both hands.

"Uhh, how? With smoke signals? No phones, you can't even 'see' anything." I 'ask' back. The guy stares at me for a few seconds, then bites both his lips as he glances away and snaps his fingers.

"Shoot. Touche." He adds as he turns to look back out his side of the heli...

"Uhh, do I want to know what all this was about?" I hear Saya ask right after.

"I think you don't." I answer.

"Yea, I think so too..." I hear Saya respond.

"We're almost there people. Less chatting, more looking outside from now on." I hear the left pilot speak up.

And sure enough, it didn't take long for the view below us to change, from a 'warzone' to a greener, less populated area.

"Fewer buildings around." I say as I keep looking out.

"Yea, most of these facilities are in the city outskirts. Easier to get the big amount of land needed to build them. Easier to manage too, no traffic jams, no people complaining about the noise and pollution. Or the smell." The machine gun man adds.

"You seem knowledgeable on the subject. A previous experience?" I ask.

"Cousin that worked in one. He would never shut up about the stuff when the family got together. So yea, 'experience' alright." He answers with a snicker.

"I see, so you know something that can help us assess the condition of the place we're going?" I ask again.

"Ah, no. The guy worked in a uhh, whatchamacallit? Dinosaur power plant? Heard this one is a waterpark type one." He responds as he dismissively shakes his hand.

"Dino, waterpark?" I ask as I frown.

"Dino what?" Saya asks right after as well.

"He means a fossil fuel power plant. And a Hydroelectric power plant." The medic answers as he turns to me.

"Oh, heh. Makes sense? I guess?" I respond as I turn to look out of the open door.

"If it makes sense. Then care to explain what in the world you mean with `Dino waterpark'. " Saya asks again.

"I could tell you, but you're being mean to me. So I won't..." I respond as I smirk slightly.

"Wha, why you littleeee. Hum, f,fine. I don't want to know anyway." I hear Saya respond. I could honestly almost 'see' her folding her arms and looking away with a pouty face...

(... I know I'm going to regret all this later. So stop being so much fun to tease. Please, for both our sakes.)

"Alright people, eyes outside. Check for infected numbers, damaged areas, you get the idea." The left pilot then speaks up. And, the power plant then came into view...

A 'river' dam. With the 'high' side of the dam, which held the river in place, seemingly being wide enough to fit three or three and a half commercial vessels. And, from the height of the dam's wall, it seemed deep enough to fit these vessels in if they got sunk. The other side of the dam, where the river normally continued, looked more like a scar on the land to be honest, a long one too, as it extended all the way towards the sea...

(Damn, big dam. And how the hell can a river be 'this' friggin deep.)

The whole place was surrounded by greenery and grassland, with only a couple of roads that led to the 'bridge' section of the dam that blocked off the river. And with only two relatively big office-like buildings near the dam itself. Definitely, not a populated area.

"That's a big river dam." I say as I whistle.

"Yea, one of the newer ones made, the river is partly human-made too. Rivers usually don't get this wide or deep by themselves." Rika responds as she hands me a set of binoculars.

(Huh, that explains why this looks so, unnatural...)

The helicopter then started to slowly lose speed, and altitude, to the point that it started to steadily circle around the facility at a slow pace...

(Uhh, let's see. I uhhh, don't see any corpses. Or survivors. Hmm, the bridge looks, flooded. No, wait. It is flooded. There are streams of water running down the dam's wall. From a distance, they looked

like darker stripes of gray. Though they were some sort of mark. Turns out, they're water streams...)

"The fence that looks towards the city is down. Fallen towards the facilities inside. Meaning something from the outside side brought it down." The binocular's guy then speaks up.

"Don't see any horde that might have toppled it though, they fell into the river? The other fence is still up too." Rika speaks up next.

"Rika, look at the edge of the dam, lakeside. The color changes to a very dark blue, almost crimson. Think that's blood diluted in water? Because if so, that's a lot of blood, from a lot of bodies." I speak up as I point at the dam's bridge.

"The dam is also closed. But, I can see small streams of water running down from it." I add as I point at the 'darker' lines on the dam's wall that run from its top, all the way to the bottom.

"Huh, you're right. This, can't be good..." Rika responds as her expression turns grim.

"Maybe it's starting to overflow? Corpses blocking the intake points?" Saya speaks up right after.

"Overflow? If so we need to act fast. The more time we take, the more damage it will do. These dams are not made to withstand 'overflow' levels of pressures for an infinite amount of time." I hear a new voice speak up...

(Uhh?)

"Ahh! M, mama. D, don't sneak up on me like that." I hear Saya yelp with a whiny voice.

(... These microphones can't pick up voices from a big distance, did her mother just shove her face next to Saya's? Or is her mic different? As in not attached to the headphone?)

"And if a horde of rotting bodies is chilling 'in' dam? Won't that make the place useless? Water won't flow even if we clear the ones outside." I ask right after.

"Yes. But if we open the flood gates, we can protect the dam from pressure damage. We can slowly clear the insides then, after the excess water has been taken care of." Saya's mother answers.

"Uhh. So, what? We are to land now and do this?" I ask, and everybody in the heli, other than the pilots, turns to look at me with a stupefied expression. Yuriko, just giggled lightly.

"No, we'll send another group to do that now. A different helicopter. You are not equipped for this. The dam might need some of its electronics switched for the floodgates to open. We will get a team of specialists to go. Don't worry." As Yuriko answers, I lift my hand and wave it as I shake my head. The rest letting out an almost synonymous sigh..

"Also, Saya would never forgive me if I sent you there." She adds right after with a giggle.

"M, maaaaa..." I hear Saya whine with a 'distant' voice.

"Ok so. The dam is still standing, but needs to get unclogged, fast." I say as I ignore Yuriko's last comment.

"Yes. Tell the pilot to go on. We are sending another team to take a better look." Yuriko responds. Then, goes silent.

"Ai. One of the high ups said we can move on. They're sending a team to do the heavy lifting." I say as I look at the rest of the team.

"Whoo boy, felt that one for a sec..." The machine gun dude sighs as he 'waves' his hand to his face, as if he was getting hot.

"You pooped your pants?" The binoculars guy asks as he glances at the soldier next to him with a smirk.

"You would be jumping out the damn bird if that was the case my man." The machine gun man responds as he turns to him before he starts chuckling, the binoculars guy also laughing through his nose as he turns to look back out.

"Boys and their poop jokes." Rika shakes her head with a one-sided smirk as she makes a small eye roll, then turns to look back out as well.

"Where to next?" I ask.

"Hospital, a straight line from here to there. It's on the other side of this landmass, and next to the central one. After that, we are going down by following the river between the landmasses. As the airport is by sea, we can use boats to drive up the river. It's safer, faster, and cheaper than going through a hostile, infested town." The right pilot responds.

"I see. And speaking of the sea, they told you about the island?" I ask again.

"Hmm? Oh, they did tell me something about checking an extra spot in the open sea. That must be it." The right pilot answers back.

"Yea. Big boss man told me to lead you towards a medium-sized island that was free of corpses, it's not very far from our endpoint if we end at the upper left point of the central landmass." I respond as I nod.

"Alright. We will check it when we finish this." The right pilot makes a thumbs-up without turning to look back, then starts picking up speed by tilting the Blackhawk forward, also lifting the helicopter to a higher altitude in the process. And, headed straight back towards the 'warzone'...

(Hmm, if we can power that dam. Will the power lines work to reach the airport? It's not 'too far' from here, but not too close either. Maybe

they aim to erect new lines that run along the river? Anyway. A Hospital? Ughh, why I really don't like this?...)

And, we slowly started to see more buildings once again. Followed by more damaged buildings soon after...

"How far is this hospital?" I ask.

"Halfway point we reach the stadium. You can't see it, but it's visible from our windshield view." The right pilot responds.

"Stadium? Hm, can't we use that to round up corpses and light em up from a distance without damaging the buildings around? You know, tossing a napalm bomb or something in their face while they are congregated in the middle of the field." I ask as I tilt my upper body to look towards the front windshield of the heli. Sadly though, I could barely see anything, other than a small part of the sky, and a smaller part of the city. Nothing reminiscent of a stadium though.

"Nope. Command wants this place as intact as a falling snowflake." Rika responds as she turns to me.

"Uhh, why? They like football this much?" I ask with a half-joking manner.

"Heh, could be. But as they told me. It seems that one of the initial 'spreads' started from there." She adds as she smiles, then turns to look outside.

"One? Wait, there were more than one 'ground zero?'" I ask right after.

"Yea, the main reason why everything went to hell so fast too. Everybody mobilized to come here once things started to get out of control, then suddenly. Hey, the other side of town? Suddenly it's a worse hell-hole than this hell-hole." Rika answers as she keeps looking outside.

(Huh, I was pretty sure by now that this whole thing was man-made, but this pretty much seals it. If it happened as she said, the timing is just, 'too' good. Too good to fuck everybody's life that is.)

"Yea, top brass has been pretty clear about us not going too close to it. Apparently, from the reports we got. If you as much as enter the buildings that have been labeled as ground zero, you will turn, then and there. Supposedly, whatever this is. It's so thick there that it kills you the moment you breathe the air..." The right pilot speaks up next.

(Huh, they send me to do grunt work, yet inform me about nothing. Sure, this has nothing to do with the missions. And I 'am' just a grunt to them. But still...)

"And there she is, to your right side." The right pilot adds.

Turning my head to look at the open door on the opposite side of the heli, I could now see a football stadium. Looking, rather normal to be honest, other than several roadblocks and barricades that were set up by the police around the exits and nearby intersections, with most of them having notable 'holes' in them. Hell, I could not even see a lot of corpses roaming about the open space around the stadium...

"Doesn't look any different than any other stadium. Where's all the fleshy walls and tentacles?" I 'ask' as I lean to my right in order to get a better look.

"... Eeewwww what?" I hear Saya ask right after. If she ever made a wincing face, now would be one of those moments...

"Ha, you watch way too many horror flicks kid. I 'wish' the building looked like an eldritch horror abomination. Bigger chance the top brass would let us create a crater out of the damn place." The left pilot speaks up.

"Or, they would send in some sad hazmats to gather samples so they could make bone spitting assault rifles. Or chonky rocket

launchers that shoot chonky bois." I respond as I bring my hands up, as if I'm holding a rocket launcher.

"Heeyy! What the hell are you talking about?" Saya asks again, this time with a tad louder, whiny voice...

"I'm talking about. CHOnky bois." I respond as I lower my arms, putting a bit more emphasis on the 'cho'...

"... Ha, ha. Very funny. Idiot..." Saya retorts with a 'pouty' voice.

"Hah, yea, not thanks. Last thing I need is having to fly a wiggly helicopter." The left pilot adds with a chuckle...

With that, we flew past one of the 'ground zero' points. And on to the hospital...

"First the clinic, then a hospital. I'm just 'asking' to get shoved into a mental asylum..." I say as I turn to look out from my side of the heli.

"You're not even going to land there. What? You scared?" I hear Saya ask with a cheeky tone.

"Yep. Me shaking in my boots. I'ma ask Saeko for cuddles to calm down." I respond as I smirk slightly.

"Wha, why youuuuuu, I'm seriously going to bite you when you come back." Saya responds with a hissing tone.

"That's kinky Saya." I answer with a flat voice.

"Kinky?" The machine gun dude instantly turns to me with his iconic stupid grin.

"Great. Now thanks to you I have the groups pervert eyeballing me." I add as I dramatically shake my head. The machine gun dude responding with a frowning 'Hey!'

"Hum, serves you right. It's because you're also a pervert." Saya answers with a disinterested voice.

"You know that unless you decide to stop being around me. That makes you one as well." I respond as I fold my arms and look outside.

Quickly realizing that we were closing in towards a tall, and rather wide building. Which had a whole block for itself. Positioned next to a bridge that went over the river and connected with the main landmass. Being surrounded by an equally large yard that changed to a driveway at the side of the building which faced the main road. Also, a rather small red cross was placed on the top corner of the building. Signifying that this was indeed our target.

"Y, you wish." Saya responded with a slight stutter, bringing me back to our little 'chat'.

"Bark-bark." I retort with a small smirk.

"S, shut up. I told this was..."

"Ok people, time for take two, same deal as before." The left pilot, not knowing that Saya was talking, started speaking as well, drowning her low, whiny voice.

"Ai, we're at the hospital. Going silent." I responded right after.

"F, fine..." Saya answers. Sounding as pouty as ever...

And. It didn't take long to realize that the hospital, was a literal hell zone.

"Am I the only one that only sees 'red' through the lower floor windows?" I ask as I keep looking through the binoculars.

"Nope. I can confirm, the lower floors are a blood bath, but it gets better on the higher ones. Floors five to seven are clean. But the lower ones? A big hell no." Rika adds after me.

"Plus getting there by land won't be any easier. The river might let a team get relatively close, but the hospital is surrounded by wrecks and corpses. Lots of corpses." I say after Rika.

"Corpses, in pullover medical gowns. So many, rotting butts wandering around the hospital's perimeter..." I arch an eyebrow as I speak, causing the rest of the group to start chuckling.

"Ughh, not only you're a pervert. You are being squicky now too." Saya groans.

"What. I'm just stating facts here." I respond.

"Does not make it..."

"Butt facts." I cut off Saya.

"... Why do I even bother." I hear her groan in response.

"Because your life would be too boring otherwise?" I add nonchalantly as I keep looking outside.

"Hey, my life was plenty exciting without you around." Saya retorts.

"Then, why do you even bother?..." I 'ask' back...

"... Ughh. Just, you wait. Won't you return before the day ends..." Saya groans.

"So, the hospital is still semi-functional. Top floors look fine, electricity excluded. And this can work for us. If the low floors are a hellscape, it would deter most survivors. So the top floors might still have things we can use." The binoculars dude then speaks up.

"Alright, so the place is worth the checkout. Noted?" I ask.

"Yea..." Saya responds.

"Alrighty then. Down the river we go." The right pilot chimes right after, and the helicopter starts to move once again...

(Really though, what does she consider 'exiting'. Acting like a chundere for Takashi? Or having make up sessions with Rei? As seen in one of the credit images in the anime. Or, maybe being overly mean to everybody?)

I started looking through the binoculars as the helicopter picked up speed, glancing at the corpses below us.

(Hmm, wouldn't that mean that Takashi and Rei used to visit Saya's mansion before the outbreak? Takashi did seem pretty chill walking around that castle-like house, while I had to count pillars in order to remember where was what. And that, would also mean that Rei and Saya were 'friends' before the outbreak. Though, they don't seem to really act like so during the outbreak...)

And while I kept looking at the corpse infested streets, a bridge started to become visible to my right, towards the direction the heli was flying at.

(Hmm? Oh? That's the bridge I and the trucks used to pass from the central landmass to the rightmost one. We really, didn't fly too far away. Funny how I never realized that we had a giant ass stadium nearby. And that it was a ground zero...)

I stop looking through the binoculars, and turn to look back towards the stadium.

(Ground zero huh? Wonder how much of what they told me is real. Obviously I'm not going to waltz there. Even if they 'are' lying. Then that means that instead of 'killing air'. It'll be full of trigger happy people. And I honestly don't know which one is worse...)

"So, new guy. Tell me about this island. We will be by the beach soon. Fill me in on the details. Location and the such." The right pilot then speaks up.

"Uhh. From the center of the central landmass. It was to the left, so now it's to our right. Can't really see what you're seeing. But it's relatively bigger than the rest. Also a little deeper into the sea compared the smaller islands around." I respond as I turn to look towards the pilots.

"Are you telling them about the island?" Saya asks right after.

"Yea. We're nearing the beach." I answer.

"Roger." The right pilot responds.

"The island also has a small shack on the beach that is looking towards the landmass." I add as I turn to look outside.

"Alright then. Changing path. Keep head, hands, legs and tongues inside the bird, I'm going to pick up speed." The right pilot then pushes the helicopter to tilt over more, making it move even faster as it started to slowly lose altitude...

"Ohh and, the island is also full of hallucinogenic plants. Don't start any accidental fires or you'll end up fantasizing about, stuff..." I add casually. Having almost synonyms 'What?' as a response from the rest of the team...

"Dude, stuff like that. You ALWAYS mention first." The machine gun dude says with a serious expression as he turns to me.

"Because you want to take a batch with you?" I 'ask' as I turn to him.

"What? No." He answers as he frowns.

(Huh, color me surpri...)

"I want a friggin truckful! Heeeeeeeeeeeeeehhhhh!" He adds as he opens his mouth and lets out a long, one breathed laugh. Which, felt more like he was choking to be honest...

(Color me, not surprised.)

"You can end up in jail if you use it on unsuspecting girls..." I respond flatly.

"... What?..." Saya asks once again, confused if her voice, yet again.

"It's not a crime, if they never catch you." He responds as he lifts his index finger towards the heli's roof. Narrowing his eyes as he smirked.

(Ok, I am definitely keeping Saya and Saeko away from this dude...)

"Ohh, really? Maybe I. Should drug you. And then leave you there buried in the sand. Take it as a unified answer of every girl on the planet in response to your 'plan'. " Rika then speaks up as she turns to look at the dude, a one-sided smirk on her face...

And, as the machine gun dude opened his mouth and turned towards Rika, I turned to look back outside. The land having already been replaced by the sea.

(Damn, the pilot was not kidding, we're going fast...)

And, with the rest of the group chattering. We moved towards the biggest island in the vicinity...

-Fifteen minutes later-

(So, much, sea...)

By now, the others had also turned silent, so all I could hear was the helicopter blades. And Sayas occasional murmur.

(I think Saya forgot she's on the microphone. She keeps talking to herself. Can't really make out what she's saying though...)

"You said there is a shack on the beach that overlooks the mainland?" The right pilot then speaks up.

"Yea." I answer as I shake my head to snap out of the 'unfocused' mode I was in.

"Hmm. I see something on the island's beach up ahead. Gonna turn the bird, tell me what it is." The right pilot responds, then tilts the helicopter back, before turning it in place. An island appearing through the open door of my side on the helicopter.

"I see it, give me a sec." I take the binoculars and look through them. Then focus on the beach that was dead ahead of us...

(Hmm...)

On the beach, a small campfire, and a shack. Ahead of the campfire heading deeper into the island, a narrow path.

(Yep. This is it.)

"We got a winner. This is the place." I answer as I look back inside the heli.

"Nice, first try too." The right pilot chuckles as he turns the Blackhawk to move closer to the island.

(Weird, the path that leads to the cave, moves 'away' from the mainland, yet the cave it leads to connects to it? Does the path make a full turn somewhere?)

"I'll fly over the island, tell me if you see anything of note." The right pilot adds.

And as the helicopter starts gaining altitude while slowly moving towards the island. The group started to look around through their respective open door. In other words, me and Rika from our side, the other three from theirs. The armband dude in the center, that has been eerily quiet up until now, stayed quiet some more, with his arms folded...

"Hey, At the peak. I think I see something." Rika then spoke up while looking through her scope, half of her body leaning outside the helicopter.

In response, the Blackhawk started gaining altitude, then started moving towards the peak of the island. And, sure enough, a small building started to become visible among the trees and vegetation, a couple of antennas along with a satellite dish on its roof. A relatively small communication tower next to it.

"Huh, this island has a com tower?" I ask.

"Uhhh, it looks like a radio station to be honest. Probably illegal one too." The binoculars guy says right after me.

"That could come in handy, the shack still had functional electronics, big chance this thing can still broadcast." I add.

"Found something?" Saya asks right after.

"Yea, radio tower, comms tower. Something among that assortment of things." I respond.

"Huh, so there was more to this island other than the shack." Saya adds casually.

"And the plants." I add.

"N, nobody cares about the stupid plants and their stupid hallucinations." Saya quickly retorts.

"So, you do remember what you saw in order to call it stupid?" I ask again.

"N, no I don't. What makes you think I do. I don't remember anything." Saya quickly responds.

(Too much denial, somebody's lying.)

"I guess this is reason enough. Let's start heading back." The right pilot then speaks up.

And as the helicopter turned to head towards the airport, which honestly was barely visible from here...

"Umm say Saya. On a scale of one to ten. How would you rank your urge to kick me right now?" I ask...

"Eleven." Saya responded flatly.

"Ok. Uhh can I have a parachute?" I ask as I turn towards the pilots.

"What for? Intend to skydive?" The left one asks with a chuckle.

"Oh, f..." And as I tried to answer...

"F....FACHOO!" I sneezed...

"Uhh, the hell..." I shake my head as I blink a couple of times...

(That came out of nowhere...

But, uhh. Why do I suddenly have the urge to curse at the sky?...)

Want some Tea?

"Alright team, going to land the bird. Good job out there." The right pilot speaks up as he slowly descends upon the helipad at the airport's field.

"Even if all you had to do was sightsee the town from a safe distance." The left pilot chuckles.

"Humm. Hey Naier, look, it seems you have somebody waiting for you~." Rika nudges me with a smirk.

Why? Because next to the helipad. Was a certain pinkette. Arms folded, tapping her foot. Looking like one of those 'angry wife' stereotypes you see in the movies. All she was honestly missing, was a face mask, and a flipper in her hand...

(... I should have taken that parachute jump...)

"Whooo boy!" The machine gun man whistles as he leans his face right next to mine.

"Look at the jugs on that chick! She's your friend? She's single? Can I have her number? Room location?..." He then starts barraging me with questions in quick succession as he keeps staring. Hard.

"Yes, no, no, and definitely no. Also, keep staring at her like that, and I'll check the cutting power of the Blackhawk's rotor blades on you..." I responded as I also kept staring...

"Does she have any hot friends she can introduce me to then?" He asks, pretty much ignoring what I just told him.

"Talking to you is making my head hurt for some reason. Can I strangle you?" I 'ask' as I turn to him.

"Wooo there, no need for violence. Make love, not war." The guy responds as he turns to me while making a thumbs up with a stupid grin, the helicopter touching down on the helipad shortly after...

"Words coming out from a soldier's mouth." I retort as I snort, then turn to look back out.

"Hey, I fight to protect all the pretty chicks in my country, not to kill. Ok, maybe to kill the ones that would try to steal them." He says as Rika opens the door.

"Then you're already a bit too late. Masked commando over here is a foreigner, and he has already stolen 'two' of your 'chicks'." Rika speaks up as she chuckles, then jumps off the heli...

"Whaaaaaaaaa..." Was all I heard the guy say as I also exited the helicopter...

And, the moment I stepped down the helipad. Saya stopped tapping her foot, unfolded her arms, and started stomping her way towards me. An obvious glare on her face...

"Uhhh, I'm going that a'way. Good luck with, whatever." I say to Rika as I point to my right, then quickly turn to walk towards my right...

"H, hey! Where'd you think you're going you damn pervert! Come back here and accept your punishment!" I hear Saya shout from behind...

Turning to glance behind me. I find that she was now, running towards me...

(Holy shit, the bouncy bounce...)

Not a second later I quickly shake my head as I snap out of the, mesmerizing sight. And before Saya could get too close in order to get 'physical'.

"Oh shit." I turn around, and start running.

"Don't you dare run!" I hear Saya shout from behind me.

"Never skip cardio day Saya!" I shout back as I keep running.

"Aaaarrghh! I'm going to kill you you damn pervert!" Saya yells...

"Saya, that's kinky!" I responded as I make a beeline towards the bridge that connected to the mainland.

"Not it's not! Aaaargh! Let me kick you!" Saya shouts once again.

(... Uhh, question is, where do I run to? The building by the other side of the bridge is no longer the main base. So, the main building here?...)

I keep glancing around me as I kept running. Or, well, ok. More like jogging. Saya's not the most athletic person around after all...

(Oh? There.)

I blink a couple of times as I spot a set of large blue containers to my right. Big enough to fit two, two and a half cars inside in a line.

(Perfect.)

I change my direction and make for the containers...

And upon closing in on them. I run straight onto the side of one. Then run up the container's wall before grabbing its top, finally rolling over to its ceiling.

"Hey! Not fair! Come back down here you stupid, cat penguin!" Saya yells after stopping next to the container, making a few futile jumps as she tried to fruitlessly climb up.

"No way, you're going to do weird things to me if I come down there." I respond as I pop my head over the edge, finding Saya with her head looking up, her face slightly flushed as she kept taking deep breaths.

"Ughhh! I'm just going to kick you until you pass out! Nothing weird about that!" She shouts as she takes another couple of jumps, trying to reach for head. Again, to no avail...

"Don't do violence Saya. Or you won't be getting any head pats later." I respond as I kept looking at her, her frown deepening even more as she purses her lips.

"I'm not a dog to want head pats you stupid idiot!" She shouts back.

"But, you looked so happy when I did so in your room..." I answer as I tilt my head. Saya's face turning even redder...

"Keep talking buster, you can't stay up there forever..." She puts her arms on her hips as she narrows her eyes.

"Ehh, I don't know, it's rather comfortable up here. Nothing is trying to kick me till I pass out for one..." I respond as I shrug...

Saya, keeps glaring at me for a few seconds, then turns to look around...

Her eyes stopping on a bunch of barrels on the far side of the container. She then throws a quick glance at me, before turning to run towards them...

(... She, seriously believes that I'm just going to stand here while she takes her time to get up?...)

The moment she started climbing the barrels and stopped glancing at me. I silently jump back down...

And once she got up on the ceiling, she found it empty.

"..Uhh..." She blinks a couple of times, before turning to look at me. Now on the ground, waving at her...

"Why youuuu...." She puffs her cheeks as her hands turn into fists, stomping her foot lightly as she stretches her arms to the front of her

hips. She then walks up to the corner, and bends her knees to jump down, but hesitates, swaying back and forth slightly a couple of times...

"Don't hurt yourself." I say as I let my hand drop.

"Ha. Now you care." Saya responds with a sarcastic tone as she glances at me, then turns to look back down.

"Hey, just because I don't let you beat the crap out of me doesn't mean that I don't care about you." I retort as I fold my arms. Saya turning to look at me for a couple of seconds.

"Prove it." She then blurts out.

"Catch me." She adds.

"... So you can elbow, slash, knee drop me? Don't think so Saya." I answer as I shake my head. Saya, in response. Lets out a low, annoyed humming noise. Then turns to look, behind me?..

"Naier?" And a new voice speaks up from behind me. Turning around, I find Saeko looking at me.

(I'm not even surprised, that she somehow managed to appear out on thin air. With how she seems to be able to casually sneak up on me whenever she wants to...)

"Hey." I motion with my head as I turn to face her completely.

"I hope, I am not interrupting anything." Saeko asks as she tilts her upper body to the side to look behind me.

"Not really, Saya's just trying to kill me..." I respond nonchalantly.

"Oh, because she's..."

And, before Saeko could finish her sentence. I felt a very sudden, and very big, increase in weight. To the point that I almost toppled

over as I hunched forward...

"The fa!..."

"Ha! That's what you get for turning your back to me!" Saya cuts me off while hanging on my back. Her hands warped around my neck...

"About to jump on you..." Saeko finishes her sentence...

"Uhh, when did you even manage to get over to my side of the container so fast?" I ask as I try to lift myself to a normal posture, Saya still not letting go of me.

"You stood there and stared at Saeko like an idiot for too long." Saya huffs as she tightens her arms around my neck, increasing the 'pressure' on my back...

"Ok. So, you intend to keep pressing your boobs on my back for a long time, or?..." And just I say that, Saya quickly releases her grip. Though, I did feel a few 'slaps' land on the back of my head. Or was it that she tried to slap my head and forgot that she needed her hands to hang on me?...

"You know, I'm counting these slaps. Some day, some time. I'm going to be getting some payback for them." I say as I turn to look at Saya, who just kept staring at me with puffed up cheeks.

"Hum, I'd like to see you try." She responds with a huff as she smirks at me.

"O,k. Just remember, it was you who told me to try. Don't blame me for it later." I respond as I fold my arms. Saya just narrowed her eyes at me, folding her arms under her chest as she leaned her face towards me...

"If, you are done here. I have a request." Saeko then speaks up, causing me to turn towards her.

(Request?...)

"My father. He wants to talk to you. Personally." She glances around for a few seconds before looking back at me.

(... Should I, start running towards the stadium?)

"W, what does he want him for?" Saya asks, her face taking on a rather perplexed frown.

"He did not tell me..." Saeko answers calmly...

(... Can I, make a save state real quick? No? Ok, guess I'll just die then...)

"Uhh, where is he?" I ask, and Saeko nods at me.

"Follow me please." She adds as she turns around.

"H, hey wait a sec!" Saya shouts. Causing Saeko to stop and turn to look behind her.

"It's still supposed to be 'my' day you know." Saya adds as she frowns, letting her arms drop in annoyance.

"I know, I will give you any time you lose from my own, tomorrow. I would prefer that we did not make my father wait." Saeko responds with a soft, yet oddly assertive tone...

And a few seconds of staring later...

"F, fine..." Saya mumbles...

"Saya, where do you want to meet up later?" I ask as I glance around. The pinkette looks at me, then at Saeko.

"Papa told me that we will be staying by the same building as were, same rooms. The airport building doesn't have many rooms. And

only the high-ups can use the ones that exist." Saya responds, then interlocks her fingers while keeping her hands lowered.

"I'll wait, in your room..." She adds with a mumble...

"Alright. Just try not to fall asleep and lock me out." I say as I nod, walk up to her, and hand her my room keys. Saya just nods and takes them...

"I'm not an idiot like you to do that..." She retorts with a whiny whisper.

"So, we can go now?" Saeko asks right after.

"Uhh, yea..." I respond as I turn to leave, giving one last glance at Saya. Who, looked like a lost puppy right now...

(Yep, feeling like shit again...)

And as I walk past Saeko, she turns around to follow me.

"Where is he?" I ask.

"In the main building..." Saeko responds.

"Uhh, Ok. I'm going to ask the obvious. Why does he want to talk to me?" I ask again.

"He did not tell me." She answers flatly.

"Ok, what did you tell him?" I ask again. Saeko just turns to look at me...

"Are you anxious?" She asks...

(Really now?...)

"Me? Not at all. Just wondering if he'll decide to split me in two so you don't have to, share." I answer as casually as I can. Causing

Saeko to giggle slightly.

"Do not worry. He will not do such a thing. Even if he believes that he should. He is the type of person who believes that in order to learn, you need to experience. Even if it is something that might end with a bad taste in your mouth afterwards." She responds calmly.

"He just wants to see what sort of person you are. As, after my 'incident'. I, stopped socializing, nothing more than surface-level interactions." She adds as she turns to look ahead.

"You, are the very first person that I let myself trust. To be someone that I wanted to more than just, know. That is why he wants to see you. And, well. I never introduced a guy to him before..." She continues as she turns to look at me.

"Does he know? About the way you thought of 'yourself'?" I ask as I glance at her.

"I never explicitly told him anything, but..." She stops in the middle of her sentence as glances away for a few seconds, then looks back at me.

"But, do not worry. After all, nothing of this really matters in the end." She adds as she smiles at me.

"Uhh, how come?" I ask as I tilt my head.

"Because no matter what he decides. I have no intention of leaving your side." She says as she glances away.

"You, make me feel wanted, loved. I like that feeling. And, I want more of it." She answers as she turns to stare at me with a tender smile.

"Though the idea of splitting you does sound, interesting. If it means that I will no longer have to share." She adds right after with a short giggle.

I glance at her, then glance around, before putting my hand sideways to cover over half my mouth, then lean towards her, as if to whisper her a secret...

"Don't tell anybody. But my left side is more good-looking compared to my right side." I whisper with a serious voice.

"Hmm? What happened to not picking favorites. You will let Saya take the 'bad' side of you?" She whispers back with a giggle.

"She wanted to beat me to unconsciousness. I'm holding a grudge." I respond flatly, Saeko stares at me for a few seconds, then closes her eyes as she reflexively brings her hand to her mouth, jerking her shoulder as she starts giggling again...

"What, I'm serious. I was in mortal danger." I say as I fold my arms.

"Really? Because from the way I saw it, Saya was stuck on that container like a cat that could not get down a tree it just climbed." Saeko kept giggling as she held her hand over her mouth.

"She was faking it to make me drop my guard. Remember, she ended up jumping on me the moment I turned my back to her." I retort as I raise a finger.

"Hmm, I guess. That did happen." Saeko tilted her head slightly as she finally stopped giggling.

We then continued walking together with the occasional mindless chatter. Until we reached the main airport building. Three visible floors on the building, and one side, the one that overlooked the bigger part of the field with the planes, made of glass panes, several of them on the bottom floor shattered.

"Uhh, they made absolutely sure this place is empty of corpses? It has been what, a day since they send a team?" I ask as I look through the shattered, glass door in front of us...

"The building is much smaller than it looks. And apparently, most corpses wandered back out after bursting inside the building, I guess a lot of people managed to escape, and create enough noise while doing so to draw them back out. That is what my father informed me of at least." Saeko answers.

"Uhh, with the glass walls being as smashed as they are. It's a possibility." I nod as I turn to look at Saeko.

"So, uhh. Your dad is at?..." I ask...

"Come on, he has a room on the top floor." Saeko answers as she walks into the building, making a beeline for one of the non-functioning escalators that were deeper into the building.

Now the insides, were a mess. Probably because we entered the 'shopping' section of the building. But honestly, I could see more stuff sprawled on the ground, rather than on the stands that they would normally be found on. And the soldiers wandering around didn't really bother cleaning the place up. Not that they didn't have better things to do...

So, after skipping the second floor by instantly going up the escalator that led to the third, and final floor...

"This floor is oddly clean..." I glanced around me as we kept walking. In contrast with the rest of the building, this floor looked untouched, no blood or crap on the ground, and everything was neatly organized, no random chairs in the middle of the walkway, no toppled stands getting in the way. Hell, I could even see my reflection on the smooth, marble like floor...

(Can't have our fat leaders walk on dirty floors now can we?)

"Uhh, this place has no actual rooms, other than the stores. Where is your father at?" I ask as I keep looking around me.

"There is an actual hotel section deeper ahead. My father has a room there." Saeko responds...

(Hotel? Saya told me that this place didn't have enough rooms. Huh, what is it? Each high up needs a whole wing of the hotel for him or her self?)

And sure enough, after walking for some time, we came to a small glass bridge that overlooked the rest of the building. And after we passed it, on its other side, we came upon a change of scenery. For starters, the floor changed to a soft mat, we were also greeted by a small square opening at the end of the bridge, a sofa at the left, and a podium at the right, probably used by somebody that stood there as reception when the hotel functioned normally. Now, a soldier was standing guard behind it.

"Are you two lost? This location is off-limits." The soldier speaks up the moment he noticed us, walking past the podium and blocking the end of the bridge.

"We are here to see Master Busujima. I am his daughter." Saeko speaks up.

The soldier looks at us for a bit, then turns away from us and starts speaking on the radio that was hanging from his chest pocket...

And a few seconds later.

"Go ahead, second corridor to the right, fifth room, number fifteen. Leave your weapons with me. You will take them once you are done here" The soldier nods nonchalantly as he returns to stand behind the podium.

(Guy has to stand still here while the high ups behind him are scratching their balls on their beds huh? The end of the world is here, yet the same shit is see.)

After we left our guns and swords with the soldier, we started walking into the narrow hotel corridors.

"Out of curiosity, what's your father's name?" I ask.

"Hideshi." Saeko responds.

(Hideshi Busujima then. At least she did not say Bang...)

"But I think it would be better if you..."

"I won't use his first name, don't worry. Last thing I need is getting labeled as disrespectful from my first sentence." I cut Saeko off, who just nodded in response.

And so, we followed the soldier's instructions. Until we were in front of a wooden door, the number fifteen on it.

"You're going to tell me to remove my mask now ain't you?" I 'ask' as I turn to her.

"Umm, it would be preferable." Saeko nods slightly again, then knocks on the door.

"Father, I brought Naier." And as Saeko speaks up, I take off my mask and balaclava, then pass them through my hand, over to my shoulder.

"The door is open." A voice answers from inside. And Saeko, then opened the door...

The room inside, looked like a normal Japanese room to be honest. Rather dimly lit. A Tatami mat covering the floor, the same type of material covering the four walls. Just the fourth one ahead of us having two medium-sized windows on each side. A king-sized bed on the left wall, and a small table in the middle that you could sit by seiza style. Four cushions around said table. Along with a steamy, no let me rephrase that, a boiling teapot on the middle of the table,

along with two small teapots. One of which, was held by Saeko's father. Who was sitting by the table, facing us.

"Thank you Saeko, you can leave us." Bang... I mean Hideshi speaks up as he looks at her, then turns to look at me.

"I will wait by the bridge." Saeko whispers as she tugs my sleeve lightly, then turns to leave.

(... Well, here we go...)

Upon entering the room, I close the door and take off my boots, then wear one set of woolen flippers that were placed next to the door's entrance.

"Take a seat. Naier Sepfier right?" Hideshi asks. I just nod as I take a seat ahead of him.

"Do you want some tea? It is quite the rare brew." He asks again as he casually lifts the boiling teapot with both hands.

(... How, are his hands not catching fire right now?...)

"Thank you for the offer, but I prefer cold drinks." I respond as I shake my head. Saeko's father nods, and leaves the teapot, then picks his own teacup.

"I expect that you know why you are here. So let me be plain. My daughter, is quite fond of you." He then adds flatly. I remained quiet.

"So tell me. How well 'do' you know my daughter?" He asks afterward.

(Uhh, ok. No point pulling punches here.)

"She takes pleasure in inflicting pain. For the same reason, she believed herself to not be worth any positive emotion from the ones around her. So she kept herself bottled up." I respond as flatly.

"I see, so she told you about herself. Then, why do you believe otherwise? If my daughter sees herself as a monster. What do you hope to gain by trying to make her believe that you see her as otherwise?" He asks again.

(Damn. You get like, zero dad points from me. Sounds to me like you don't even 'care' that your daughter was suffering. As it seems that you were very well aware of what she was going through with a response like that...)

"Never said that I believed otherwise." I answer. Causing Saeko's father to stare at me. I mean, stare harder than before.

"But what is better? A monster that wants to protect you? Or an angel that looks to smite you down?" I add.

(I could just say 'I love your daughter and want the best for her'. But I don't think mister hardcore over here will believe half a word of it.)

"So you just want her for your protection? Now that the world is a danger to your survival." He retorts.

"Nobody interacts with another out of pure goodwill, there is always some self-interest. The point is when one's interest does not conflict with the other's." I answer.

"And, once you are safe? Then what? You will discard her and run after the 'other', more normal girl? Once your 'interest' in Saeko is gone." He asks...

(... Of course she told him...)

"No, for starters. My 'interest' in her is not just her ability to help us, to help me. I would have told her so otherwise. And I made a promise to her, one that I have no intention of breaking. But, these are just words, and they have no weight behind them." I respond.

"You are correct. Words, do have no weight. But what does have, is that my daughter seems to believe in you. And, while normally I would see to cut you down myself here and now, for the way you are 'handling' my daughter. I, also honestly can't remember the last time I have seen her be this, happy. So I will keep it simple." He responds as he takes a small sip from his teacup.

"I do not 'care' of what you do. For as long as it keeps my daughter smiling." He adds as he looks down, to leave the teacup on the table.

(Really? Just, how miserable was Saeko before the outbreak for him to actually say this?...)

"But, should you end up hurting her with your actions. I will make sure, that she is the last person you will ever hurt." He says as he turns to stare at me.

(... And that, was definitely a death threat...)

"If I fall so far as you hurt her on purpose? Then do so." I respond as I nod slightly.

(... I mean, if I do end up doing something like that, then there's a big chance that something has gone off the deep end in my brain in the first place. She and Saya are the only reasons I can even consider this fucked up world of being 'worth it'.)

Saeko's father nods as he picks up his teacup again.

"Though, I suppose that I probably won't really have to do anything of the sort, should you do such a thing." He says as he takes a sip from his teacup again.

"The faith Saeko has in you now. It can as easily turn into an unrelenting rage, should you squander what she has given you." He adds with a casual tone. I, just kept looking at the man...

"But, I should not ramble like an old man. You just returned from your little trip. You probably want to rest. So don't let me hold you anymore." He says as he takes another sip. I nod and start getting up.

"Are you still sure you don't want some tea? It's really good." Saeko's father casually speaks up again...

(Really now?...)

"Uhh, no thanks. I still like hot drinks the same amount I liked them some minutes ago." I respond as I shake my head.

"You youngsters really can't handle some hot tea? Saeko seems to hate it as well." He chuckles as he focuses back on his tea.

(The idea that you are the weird one here for drinking boiling water for fun does not cross your damn mind?...)

And, with a slight bow I turn to head to my boots...

(... Well. I'm not dead. That's, good...)

"Oh, and one last thing." He says as he keeps looking at his teacup.

"The Busujima name holds weight. No matter what my daughter thinks of you. I don't intend to let her be with somebody who is less than her. I expect you to prove yourself, that you are worthy of the spot." He adds as he takes another casual sip.

(Woe is he who dares to dirty your family's name huh? But leaving your daughter to suffer in order to gain 'experience' is fine...)

With that. I exit the room, and start heading back towards the bridge...

(Uhh, ok. That, just happened. Saeko's father knows about Saya. But decided that because his daughter was now 'happy', it didn't matter? And, I know I already asked this myself. But holy hell, just

how miserable was she before the outbreak for him to think like that? But. Uhh, that's good for me. Means I now have to worry about only 'one' dad. That honestly, I think won't be this uh-hh, 'accepting'...)

Once I turned to the hallway that led to the bridge. I spotted Saeko sitting on the couch at the opposite side of the podium that the guard was at...

(Still, nothing he said really changes anything. Because I have no damn intention of leaving Saeko, especially now that I managed to get this close to her...)

After I got close enough for both Saeko and the guard to notice that I was there, the former got off the sofa and turned to me.

"Ready to go?" She asks.

"Yea, let's get our stuff and head towards our rooms." I respond and turn to the soldier. Who nods, and hands us back our equipment without saying a word. After that, we started walking on the bridge...

And the moment we picked some distance.

"How did it go?" Saeko asks as she leans forward and towards me.

"Ohh, you know. Normal stuff. Demanding proof that I'm not going to be a stain on your family's name, death threats, boiling hot tea offerings. Exactly the things I expected..." I respond as I keep looking straight. Saeko just blinks at me a couple of times.

"Umm, care to take that, one at a time?" She asks as we reach the end of the bridge.

"Death threats for if I hurt you. Proof that I am worthy of having you around me. He asked me to drink boiling tea with him." I respond flatly.

"Hmm. Better than I expected." She answers as she smiles, causing me to turn to her with an arched eyebrow.

(... Yep, you're as crazy as your dad alright...)

"Come again?" I ask.

"If he wants you to prove yourself. It means he believes that you 'can' prove yourself. Otherwise, he would not have even mentioned it. As for the rest. My father just likes drinking very hot tea for some reason. And.." As she finishes her sentence, she gets slightly closer to me.

"You, are not going to hurt me, are you?~" She asks with an, almost seductive whisper...

(... Holy shit, that just ringed all the wrong bells...)

"Oh yes, I'm a real fan of ruining relationships I wrecked my head over..." I respond as I glance at the purple-haired samurai.

"Hmm? You, wrecked your head over me?" She asks as she tilts her head slightly.

(More than I'd like to admit. Especially when it came to you and Takashi...)

"Now you're just trying to tease me, so I'm not going to answer." I chuckle as we reach the escalator that led to the lower floor. Saeko just giggled before pulling herself back. We then moved to the first, and then the bottom floor, before moving back outside.

"Umm, Naier? Can I ask you of, another favor?" Saeko speaks up again as we start walking outside. I just silently turn to look at her.

(... Should I be scared?...)

"Could we walk a bit, slower?..."She asks as she turns to stare at me.

"Huh, figured you'd ask me to take off my mask or something..." I respond as I slide my fingers under her palm, wrapping my hand

around hers.

"Naier. You, are not wearing your mask..." She responds as she tilts her head...

I bring my free hand to my face, and poke my cheek...

"I, forgot to wear it? Huh, weird..." I frown slightly as I turn to look at my mask, still on the shoulder of the arm that Saeko was holding.

"Well, I am afraid that I have no intention of letting go of your hand. So you can not really wear it now..." She says with a slight, one-sided smile.

"Uhh, I was the one who grabbed your hand, so I guess I effectively just shot myself in the foot..." I respond as I turn to look ahead, letting a small sigh through my nose...

With that, we continued in silence. Not that we really needed to speak. Personally, feeling her squeezing my hand every so often was enough. Like verification that she was right next to me...

Splitting paths

"Nahh, go for astronaut." I point at the laptop's screen on Saya's legs, who was sitting with her back to my chest, while I was sitting on the bed, with my own back against the bed's headboard. A radio placed on the stand that was next to the bed. One that Saya used to talk with her father, or mother. Apparently, she's something like his 'messenger' now, so he won't have to send soldiers to find me every time he wants me for something...

"Pfft. Your penguin cosplayer? An astronaut? Petty criminal, at best. He won't be getting any promotions with his crappy athletic stat. Let alone bringing any money back." Saya snorts as she keeps panning the camera around the relatively big seaside house on the screen...

"I got us the money tree, it will make up for it." I respond...

(I'm going to be honest here. I didn't expect Saya to 'like' playing video games. So imagine my surprise when I came here and found her playing sims again...)

"Still, why can't we use your old save file? I mean, you went ahead and dressed me as a damn penguin again. The only difference is that my surna..."

"B, because I had progressed too far by myself there! Don't be a lazy ass, it's no fun if you gain everything from the get-go." Saya quickly cuts me off.

"Uhh, you got a point there..." I respond as I tighten my arms around her waist, Saya wiggling slightly to fix her posture without saying anything...

(And, this is way more fun than I thought it'd initially be. Then again, I guess doing things you like with somebody you like is always fun.)

Saya then stops moving her fingers, and starts staring at the screen...

Before turning the laptop slightly to the left, towards the windowed wall. Making the screen 'mirror' our reflections a bit more clearly. And as she kept staring, a small smile crept up on her face, or well, her reflection's face.

"Watcha smirking for?" I ask I turn to look at the actual Saya. Something that was easier said than done, what with her having two giant twintails on each side of her head.

"N, nothing." She quickly responds as she turns the laptop back to its initial position. Then starts to play the game normally again.

"Hey, can I ask you something?" She asked as she kept looking at the screen.

"What's up?" I ask back.

"Can you, stay here?" She asks as she lowers her sight slightly, turning to look at the keyboard.

"Uhh. Well, this place 'is' nice. But I don't know how viable it is to stay under the army's command in the long term..." I respond as I tilt my head.

"I, don't mean here as in this building you idiot..." Saya answers with a slight huff.

"I mean 'here'. As in Japan..." She adds with an almost whiny whisper...

"Uhhh." I just blink a couple of times as I turn to look at her.

"M, my house is big, we have a lot of empty rooms. Once we get it back you can stay in one of them I'm sure my papa and mama won't mind they might seem harsh but I'm sure that they would..."

"Oh, that's what you mean. Uhh, I can't just live as a permanent guest in somebody else's house Saya." I cut the pinkette off before you could increase her speech speed to 'gibberish' level...

Saya just keeps her head lowered...

"You wouldn't be a guest, stupid..." Saya whispers through her teeth, silently enough to the point that I think she did not want me to actually hear her. She then takes a deep breath.

"I, I know, sorry. I'm being too egotistical. You don't even know how your actual family is doing, Yet here I am, saying stupid stuff..." Saya folds her arms under her chest as she speaks in a low toned voice.

(... Uhh. Right, I'm supposed to have 'them' too. I had honestly forgotten about them. As they are not even my' family to begin with...)

I glanced at Saya, who looked, way more upset than I honestly expected...

(Uhh, ok. I really don't want her to be like this, so...)

"But, I got no intention of leaving Japan anyway." I say flatly. Causing the pinkette to turn towards me with a sad, confused frown.

"Why do you think I was in Japan by myself in the first place? I, was not exactly on the best terms with them." I add as I turn to look towards the windowed wall to my left.

(... That, is actually a lie. The 'me' before 'me', was actually on pretty good terms with them. No dick of a father, or evil stepmother, or fucked up brothers. They were, normal. And happy, to put it plainly.)

"Oh, I'm, sorry. I didn't mean to bring it up..." Saya responds, looking even more down in the dumps now...

(Oh for fucks sake, now you found the time to be sensitive?)

"Saya, let me clear about something." I let out a small sigh as I moved to get next to her, ending on her side as she turned her head to look at me.

"You and Saeko, you two mean a lot to me, more than 'I' mean to myself." I lean myself slightly towards her as I place my hand on her thigh. Saya blinking blackly at me a couple of times before glancing around as she lowered her face again.

"When you decided to come with me in the river. Other than the fact that I freaked out. It was the happiest moment of my damn life, to know that you wanted to come with me, even though staying with Takashi was the safer option." I take my hand from her thigh and bring it to her cheek. Saya just stayed frozen on the spot. Well, 'frozen' is a weird word to use for the moment, as now that I was not wearing my gloves. I could feel her cheek, and it was burning up.

"So remember, just having you two around me, is reason enough for me to say that this whole shitshow is worth it. So stop looking so distraught over this." I add as I stroke her cheek with my thumb.

"... stupid..." Saya mumbles.

"... you didn't have to mention Saeko..." She whines as she turns her body to face me, the laptop sliding off her legs and onto the bed.

"You're supposed to be mine now. So, don't mention Saeko. Only me..." She adds as she lowers her head.

(Well, at least she no longer seems to be down in the dumps, now she's just pouting again. Normal chundere stuff I suppose)

"Hmm? I'm yours? Completely?" I 'ask' as I lean towards her lowered face.

"Y, yes. So don't disagree with me..." Saya whines back as she lifts her head to look at me.

"Hmm, I didn't disagree with you?" I ask as I tilt my head, lowering my hand from her cheek.

"I want you to k, kiss me..." She then blurts out with a commanding tone as she keeps looking at me, her face turning to match the color of her hair by the second...

(First say not to disagree, then shoot commands?)

Yet, the moment I try to lean towards her, she puts her hands between me and her, and pushes me...

"M, me on top..." She adds as she turns her head to look away.

(Ohh? My you scheming little...)

She then pushes me again, slightly, only enough to actually feel that she did so.

"Don't disagree..." She whines as she keeps looking away.

"I, didn't?" I tilt my head slightly as I keep staring at her.

(Was she always this cute?)

"Then lie down already..." She whines back, 'pushing' me once again...

I, just did what she asked. It's not like I was losing something here...

And the moment I was with my back on the bed, Saya passed one of her legs over me, effectively sitting on me...

"Happy now?" I ask as I raise an eyebrow.

"S, shut up..." She squeaks as she keeps looking away.

And, we stayed like that...

For a few minutes...

"You know I can't do anything from down here, right?" I ask as I keep looking at the blushing pinkette, who darted her head to me, before looking away again...

"A, I know that..." She responds as she takes a deep breath, then clears her throat.

"Ok, I can do this." She whispers.

(... She, seriously just said that out loud?...)

And while Saya was looking like a blushing trainwreck and I was trying to hold my self back from snickering, she grabs my shirt with both hands and turns to look at me, then lowers her head towards mine...

A bit, fast. Too fast. Forehead bumping kind of fast...

"Ow! Dmitit..." Saya instantly puts her hand on her forehead as she leans back with an annoyed groan...

"Are you sure you don't want me to, take over?" I ask as I make a one-sided smile at her.

"N, no! I can do it!" She retorts as she frowns at me, one hand still massaging her forehead...

(This is not a challenge to get mad over you dumbo...)

She then lowers her self again, this time, slower...

And this time, she did manage to do what she was aiming for in the first place, as she pressed her lips on mine...

Then, a few seconds passed. And the seconds, then turned to minutes. Saya showing no signs of stopping...

(She's, really into it. Who would ha...)

And my thoughts get interrupted, as I feel something 'invading' my mouth...

(... Uhh, Saya just shoved her tongue in? When did she, uhh, wait. She's, panting? Oh boy, don't tell me...)

As I bring my hand to her back and lightly run my fingers over her spine, she tenses up and lets out a soft moan, pushing herself against me...

(... Well. Ok, let's be honest, there's only one way this can e...)

"Saya are you there?" And the radio goes live...

"EEP!" And the Pinkette quickly pulls back, literally jumping off me and landing on the bottom half of the bed, next to my feet. She then starts darting her head around in a panic, before looking at the radio...

(... End...)

She then quickly gets to the radio while still staying on the bed.

"Y, yes?" She asks, with a panting voice...

"Saya? Are you alright? You sound, funny." A female voice asks through the radio.

"Ahh. Y, yea I'm fine. I'm fine, I was just, uhhh. Exercising." She blurts out as she keeps taking deep, bated breaths...

"I see. Is Naier with you?" The voice asks.

(She's not that stupid to actually say...)

"Yes." Saya answers flatly...

(SAYA YOU A FOKIN MORON?!)

"Can you tell him to come over please? Your father needs him for something." The voice asks with the same tone...

"Y, yea, Ok..." Saya nods slightly, her voice steadily returning to normal...

"Alright. Thank you dear." The voice responds...

"Did you seriously just..."

"And, sorry for interrupting you during your exercising." The voice adds with a slight giggle as it cuts me off

"... Fuck..." I add as I keep staring at the radio.

"W, what? Got a problem with what I said?" Saya 'asks' as she turns to look at me with a blushing frown...

"... Nope, everything's jiffy..." I respond as I let my upper body fall back on the bed...

"Other than your mother probably thinking that you're no longer a virgin." I add flatly.

"WHAT?!" Saya shouted as I felt the bed shake...

"Seriously. Just, take this chat you had with your mother and replay it in your head." I say as I lift my finger towards the ceiling...

"Y, your ove..."

"Just do it, question by question. Answer by answer..." I cut her off. Saya then, falls quiet...

And, about a minute later...

"Oh God..." She speaks up as she comes to a 'realization'...

"But, but..." She then stutters as she turns to stare at the radio that she was holding with both hands...

"M, mama!" She shouts as she quickly presses the talk button on the radio...

"Hmm? Yes Saya?" Her mother speaks up.

"I, I didn't do anything with Naier!" She blurts out with a loud voice...

(... God, I could facepalm my hand through my face right now...)

"H, he's an idiot, I don't like him!" She adds right after...

(... Ok, that, actually hurts.)

Yuriko, who was on the other side of the radio, just giggled.

"You should not say things like that without thinking Saya." Yuriko responds.

"Wha, bu..."

"Just come to the bottom floor with Naier." She adds, cutting off the flustered pinkette.

"... Ok..." Saya answers with a defeated tone.

"You can continue exercising afterward ~" Yuriko says with a chuckle before closing the radio....

"Mamma!" Saya shouts back. And got no response...

"W, we should go to them, now! " She shouts as she quickly jumps off the bed, then runs to the door that leads outside.

And as she grabbed the handle. She stops, and turns to look down. Between her legs...

"A, I'm going to change first!" She responds as loudly as she runs to the bathroom after grabbing a new set of, everything. While I was just looking at the whole thing unfold, still laying on the bed...

(... I don't know what's weirder. That I'm actually bothered because she said that she doesn't like me. That she decided to change clothes after looking 'between' her legs. Or her mother's reaction to what she 'thinks' might have happened. I mean, continue exercising afterward? Really now?...)

I get to a sitting position on the bed, get the laptop, and leave it on the stand after closing it completely...

A few minutes later, Saya exited the bathroom, wearing a loose white woolen like shirt that went to about the middle of her hips, a wide 'v' cut leaving one of her shoulders visible. Her school skirt partly visible under the shirt. And, I think she was also wearing tights under her skirt, as I could see a pair of tightly fitting leggings that ended a couple of centimeters higher above her knees, her shoes were a pair of pink and white sneakers...

"Why are you still sitting there! Come on!" She says as she turns to head towards the door again, this time, swinging it wide open.

(Well, let's go...)

I get off the bed and head towards the door as well, wearing my 'headgear' in the process.

"Come on you slowpoke!" She groans with an annoyed tone as she turns towards me, only to find me standing next to her.

"Why are you wearing that thing again?" She asks as she points at my face.

"Protection." I responded flatly...

"Huh, from wha..."

"Your father." I cut her off...

"Y, you have no reason to need protection stupid. N, nothing happened." Saya glances around as her face starts to blush.

"Yea, but he doesn't know that, so let's go before he decides to come up here with a vengeance..." I respond as I point behind Saya, towards the hallway.

"You are the one who's slow here." Saya retorts as she turns to leave the room, with me following behind her.

"You have my keys?" I asked once I got outside.

"Right." She nods and pulls the keys out of her jacket's pocket, then locks the door.

With that, we headed to the stairs, and started going down...

"Does your father know how to shoot a gun?" I ask as we keep moving down the stairs.

"I don't know, he usually trained with his sword, never seen him use a gun. My Mama does though." Saya answers as she glances at me.

"Your Mama didn't seem to mind getting the wrong idea. Or she's faking it so she can shoot me once we go down.?" I 'ask'.

"N, nothing will happen ok!" Saya retorts with a loud voice.

"Probably..." She then whispered as she turned to look at the steps under her...

(Very assuring you are...)

And with that, we went to the bottom floor...

Finding Saya's mother in a business-like suit. She was not wearing a jacket to match the pants though, instead sporting a long-sleeved,

white, buttoned shirt.

Her dad was also there, in his usual militaristic black uniform, his sword on his side...

(... Ok, he is not charging at me while screaming bloody murder. That's good.)

"Naier, good job on the recon." Souichiro then speaks up in his usual, 'I'm always glaring' expression.

"Now, the reason I called you here is to tell you what I want you to do next." He adds as he folds his arms...

(... Wait, wanted to call me in order to dump work on me? Ugh, should have figured...)

"The lookout thing?" I ask, and he shakes his head.

"No, reclamation of a location." He responds flatly...

(... Whut?...)

"We have three of them right now. The hospital, the cinema and the gas station. All locations you should know, as they are the ones you saw from the helicopter." Shouchrio then turns to look behind him, through the double glass door that led outside.

(... Oh sure, just let me split myself in three real quick...)

"All of them?" I ask as I tilt my head.

"No, just one. Best I can offer you, is the liberty of choosing which one." He responds as he turns around completely, now facing the door, with his back turned to me...

"You can choose your team for this. Tell my daughter to inform me when you're ready. One hour, tops." He adds as he starts walking away...

(Yes sir, thank you sir, I almost fucked your daughter sir. Maybe I should have done so sir...)

"This is ridiculous..." Saya hisses in an irked tone before turning around to stomp her way towards the stairs...

Leaving me. And her mother...

"I'm sorry you have to go through this." She says as she glances at her daughter, then at me.

"Nothing is really free, ain't that how it goes? If we want to be treated like we're special compared to the rest of the civilians, we need to 'be' special. That translates to being of use to the ones that decide if we deserve such treatment..." I respond as I fold my arms. Yuriko just smiles at me.

"Thank you, for understanding." She adds as she nods slightly.

"Uhh, actually speaking of understanding, I need to ask you something." I say before Yuriko could turn to leave. She nodded again as she stayed in place.

"About your little chat with Saya on the radio. Don't take it as a complaint. But, uhhh, why do you seem so, nonchalant about it?" I ask plainly as I tilt my head.

Yuriko just giggles as she shakes her shoulders lightly, closing her eyes as she turns her head away.

"You might not realize it, but both I and my husband hold you in pretty high regard. Not only because you managed to save us from a really ugly situation. But, from my point of view at least. I can say that you're a good person. And Souichiro would not count on you this much, if he didn't trust you to pull through." She responds as she turns to look at me.

(Second time today I heard the 'I have faith in you so I'm going to fuck up your life'...)

"Because I pushed her to say goodbye to you in the estate? I mean, that's all I did when you were around..." I ask as I tilt my head.

"Sounds insignificant to you? Just more proof that I'm right then. If you can, see it from my side, Takashi, who I considered to be Saya's only real childhood friend, was fine with sitting in the corner and watching as my daughter hanged her head." She adds as she smiles bitterly...

"I know that I failed at raising her, I did not spend enough time with her when I should have. Because of that she became spoiled, aggressive, easily agitated. But seeing the few people that she called her friends stare at her from the sidelines while she needed somebody to push her to do the right thing. It, doesn't make it any better." She adds as she looks away, lightly running her fingers under her eyes.

"But, to answer your question. Of course I knew that you two didn't do 'anything'." She says as she turns back to look at me, the previous 'weakness' she just showed now nowhere to be seen, like it never actually happened in the first place.

"Neither of you would have bothered answering the radio if that was the actual case." She adds with a small chuckle as she smiles...

(... Are you always smiling when you actually want to cry? Life must suck if you can't express your emotions...)

"Uhh, how am I supposed to answer that?" I ask back, Yuriko just smiles at me again.

"You don't, and I think it's better you return. I'm pretty sure that there are people that you need to speak with right now." She answers as she motions behind me with her head...

"Uhh, yea, true that. Well, I'm going to get going then." I say as I make a small bow, then turn to head towards the empty stairs.

(That, was something I didn't expect to see. Does she really trust me that much to open up like this?...)

With that thought, I make my way back towards my room...

(Ok, focus. We have other problems to deal with now. Three of them. And to be honest, one is worse than the other. Hospital? Fucking hell zone. The gas station? Overrun and blocked off. The only location I don't know, is the cinema. Could be overrun, could have survivors. But fat chance it's empty...)

Upon making my way towards my room. I find Saya waiting outside, tapping her foot, arms folded, and an angry frown on her face...

"Huh, you actually look more annoyed than me right now." I speak up as I get next to her, causing her to turn towards me.

"Can you believe him!" She shouts as she points her whole hand towards the stairs.

"Choose where to go?! These places are all death traps! He's going to get you killed!" She shouts again...

"Uhh, not much we can do about it. It's that, or get kicked into the masses. I'd rather do this, than having to sleep in a sleeping bag next to five farting guys." I respond as I fold my arms. Saya showing no sign of calming down...

(Plus you know, 'you' would have to sleep next to them. And the way you usually sleep, is just a 'tad' provocative...)

"What is going on?" And, a new voice speaks up from behind me. Turning to it, I find Saeko looking at us. Her hair up on a ponytail, wearing a rather, tightly fitting black shirt, along with a black,

unzipped jacket, the lower section of her body hidden behind the door frame...

(Huh? Aren't these my clothes?...)

"Papa is trying to get Naier killed is what's going on!" Saya shouts as she turns to Saeko, turning to point her finger at me...

"... What?" Saeko, just tilts her head in confusion...

"New 'mission' ." I respond as I lift both hands and bend my index and middle fingers a couple of times.

"Alone?" Saeko asks right after as she narrows her eyes.

"No, he told me I can pick who c.."

"Wait there." And she cuts me off as she disappears into her room...

Only to pop up literally twenty seconds later, fully dressed in her combat outfit. Well, 'combat' as in her school shirt, and that excessively short skirt with stocking, along with the arm and leg guards. The Sword hanging from the belt on her hip.

(How the hell did she change so fast?!)

"I think we should go inside a room before we keep on talking." Saeko adds as she stops next to me.

I nod, and turn to Saya...

"W, what are you staring at me for?" She asks as she frowns.

"First, you forget to tell your mom about..." I stopped talking as I remembered that Saeko was with us now...

"The thing. Now, you forget that you got the keys to my room?" I add after a few seconds, Saya's eyes going wide in response.

"OH CRAP!" She shouts as she starts to run towards the stairs.

Only to end up bent over as I placed my arm in front of her, making her run into it...

"What are you doing! We need to!..."

"I already talked with your mother for you. You're welcome. The door please?" I 'ask'.

"O, oh..." Saya stares blankly at me for a few seconds, then backs off, straightening her shirt before turning to head to the door.

"W, what did you tell her?..." She asks as she unlocks the door...

(... Don't, don't, don't.)

"That you couldn't control yourself." I respond flatly. Causing Saya to turn at me with a panicked expression, her eyes taking a whole new level of 'wide'.

(Fuck, couldn't resist...)

"Y,yyy you said WHAAAT?!" She shouted as she kept holding on the door.

"Naier? Is there something that I should be aware of?" Saeko asks as she turns to me, resting her hand on her blade's hilt...

(Oh shiet...)

"Not really, Saya just gave all the wrong answers when talking to her mother via the radio, while having all the wrong, voice tones. And no, before you have a heart attack, I did not tell her that." I respond as I look at Saeko, then at Saya.

"What did you tell her then!" Saya shouts yet again.

"That nothing happened." I respond casually as I walk past her, and into the room.

"I don't believe you!" She retorts as she also walks into the room.

"I, still have no idea of what is going on here..." Saeko adds as she tilts her head...

And like that, we moved back into the room. Me sitting on the chair by the table that was on the far-off corner of the room, next to the windowed wall and the wall that led to the bathroom to the right. Saya sitting on the bed along with Saeko.

"For your own good, you better not be lying about what you said to my mama..." Saya said as she lets out a huge sigh after plopping on the bed's corner.

"I'm not, so let's focus on the reason you started shouting in the first place?" I respond.

"I was not shouting!" Saya shouts...

"Ai, so. About the team I'm supposed to make." I say as I pretty much ignore the pinkette.

"Hey don't ignore me!" Saya whines as she puffs her cheeks.

"Saya, I want you on the comms again." I respond flatly. Causing said pinkette to blink blankly at me a couple of times, her 'rage' seemingly deflating like a balloon...

"Uhh, what?" She asks as she frowns.

"I want you, to be on the comms." I answer as flatly again.

"No. I'm coming with you." She protests as she folds her arms...

(Oh boy...)

Saeko during all this, stayed quiet, switching her sight between me and Saya.

"And we'll get some random smuck and hope he's competent enough. While he also gets to listen in on us instead." I respond as I also fold my arms.

"Hum, you say that. But you just want to be alone with Saeko..." She whines as she turns to look away, a pout still on her face..

"Saya, you were already on the coms once. You already know how that side works. I need somebody there who can react fast. No matter where I decide to go, I won't be drawing a map while running from hordes, or keeping information of what and who's where and in what number. I expect the coms to have and give me that information, fast. Essentially, to be some sort of minimap for me." I respond as I lean on the chair.

"You expect me to trust all that on some random dude that I have never seen before? Plus, you can draw, meaning you can make an outline of a map much better than the rest of us." I add. Saya keeps her head turned towards the stand, her cheeks still puffed...

"I can do all that while I am 'there'." She complains with a whiny tone.

"Yea, but it'll be too hindering. Or you think that sitting in front of a computer and noting down information is as easy to do while you have some stinking corpse clicking its teeth at your ear?" I 'ask'. Saya does not respond, just keeps looking away, arms folded.

(Uhh...)

"Don't be so childish Saya." Saeko then speaks up, a serious tone in her voice.

"W, what?!" Saya darts her head to Saeko.

"Naier trusted you with something to do. Do you intend to keep whining and refusing what he asked of you without giving him a better solution?" Saeko 'asks' as she crosses her legs.

"That's easy for you to say! You are the one that is going to be there alone with him!" Saya retorts as she turns to glare at the purple-haired samurai.

"Because I am a better fighter than you. And I am going there to protect him. Or, you believe you can do a better job at that compared to me?" Saeko asks as she narrows her eyes, seemingly getting a bit more 'agitated'...

(Ok, let's stop this now, before it blows out of proportion.)

"If you'll start gnawing at each other, I'm just going to recruit other people that I alr..."

"No." And both of them cut me off almost synchronically.

"Then start working together? If we start bickering while we are out there it will only make things harder." I respond as I point to the windowed wall with a stern voice...

"I'm looking at this in a way so I can make sure that I don't lose either of you." I add as I keep staring at the two girls.

"I, apologize. I let myself get carried away." Saeko responded as she placed both her feet on the floor, lowering her head slightly for a few seconds. Then turns to look at Saya. Along with me...

Saya, glanced at both of us, then hugged herself by wrapping her arms tighter under her chest...

"F, fine. Sorry..." She said in a low, slightly annoyed tone.

"As long as everybody in this room understands that all of us need to be focused in order to deal with any unexpected problems." I say as I let out a small sigh.

"So, as it's pretty obvious by now. Saeko, you're coming with me." I add as I turn to the purple-haired girl. Who responded with a nod.

"Saya, you are on coms?" I add as I turn to the moody pinkette.

"Why are you asking me?..." She asks back...

"..." I, just kept staring at her in silence...

"Ughh, fine, fine. I'll be at the coms..." She groans as she rolls her eyes, letting her hands fall to her thighs.

"Or, you know. You can both be at comms. And I can ask Rika..."

"ABSOLUTELY NOT!" Saya shouts as she turns to me.

"You sure? I mean, it's pretty obvious you don't want to be at coms." I ask.

"And how does that connect with what you just said?" She asks with an annoyed tone.

"Well, if it's so hard you can have Saeko to help. But I'm not crazy enough to go by myself. And Rika is the only other person I know here. Because you know, we're using her stuff." I respond.

"Hard? I never said that it's hard, I could do that crap with my eyes closed." Saya huffs.

"Perfect, you got the job. Saeko, with me then." I clap my hands and point at Saya, then at Saeko.

"Wha..." Saya blinks blankly at me a couple of times, then quickly shakes her head, and blinks at me blankly at me some more...

"So, the question is. Where 'are' we going to go?..." I ask as I turn to look towards the windowed wall..

Movie night

"I don't see the reason for us to go in a location that's already visibly overrun. Sticking our necks out won't give us anything..." Saya folds her arms as she speaks, looking out the glass wall with a slight frown.

"Well, both the hospital and the gas station were in bad shape." I respond as I tilt my head, glancing at the new textbook we had on the nightstand, which was now between me Saeko and Saya. Three paragraphs written on an otherwise empty page. One titled hospital, the other cinema, and the third gas station.

"The hospital is out of the question." Saya responds as she turns to me.

"It's a damn hospital. Everybody would have rushed there when this thing started, just because the top floors 'looked' fine does not mean that they are. And who knows what else might be there." She adds as she narrows her eyes at the textbook.

"Then it's the cinema, or the gas station." Saeko speaks up.

"The gas station honestly nudges me the wrong way for some reason, the only thing it had going for it was the open space, which would make it easier to spot corpses from a distance and make a quick escape, but with the car pile-up it had, even that is null. And unlike a house, any noise made there won't be blocked by a wall. Having a horde staring at me over a bunch of cars that might not even have their hand brakes pulled, sounds like a no go for me..." I respond as I lean on my chair.

"That leaves the cinema then." Saeko tilts her head slightly as she also folds her arms.

"Yea. Best bet to be the safest choice too. Noise insulation would have kept any corpses from going inside while electricity still ran, everything else around it would have been louder. The only problem is, that it's as likely to have survivors, as it is to be overrun. And well, if somebody turned in the cinema and infected the rest while inside, noise insulation works both ways." I add with a nod.

"Hmm, the main doors that led inside, do you remember if they were open?" Saya asks.

"Nope." I respond flatly. Saya purses her lips and turns to look towards the window, seemingly annoyed by my answer.

"I was too busy trying to explain to you 'why' it was a good spot to note down, to pay attention to that." I respond with a slight smirk, causing Saya to turn towards me with a frown, before sticking her tongue out for half a second, then turning to look back out the window again...

(... Huh, since when Saya started sticking her tongue out so much? She never did that in the anime. Maybe she feels more open towards me? So she's being extra childish?...)

I hold myself from chuckling at the thought, then take a deep breath before getting up.

"Well, cinema it is then." I add as I stretch my arms.

"Let's go inform your dad Saya. If we're lucky, we might be able to get there by air. As the building itself is pretty far away." I respond as I turn to the pinkette.

"Ha, doubt they'd even let us take a bicycle along if it's up to them." Saya snorts as she also gets up.

With that, I 'arm' myself with my sword and Scar-H, then move to leave the room, Saeko and Saya following behind me after they gathered their own stuff.

Once out, we headed to the stairs. And before we started going down, I made one last quick check, making sure that all the extra mags were on the vest, and that they were not empty. Then, we started going down the stairs...

"Your dad is waiting downstairs or you will inform him via radio?" I ask as I turn to Saya.

"I doubt that he'd wait for a whole hour. But let's go down first, if papa is not there, I'll radio him then." Saya responds as she glances at me, then turns to look down the stairs again.

And a few minutes later, we were on the bottom floor. Among the people here, I could spot a few of Souichiro's men, none of them paying any attention towards us. In other words, they were not here for us.

"Don't see your mother, or father." I fold my arms as I look around.

"Papa, we're ready." Turning to Saya's voice, I find her already holding the radio next to her mouth.

" *Come by the bridge that connects to the airport, the boats are here.*" A stern voice responds.

"Well, so much about using a helicopter..." I say as I tilt my head slightly.

"Hmm, come on Naier. This might be, fun." Saeko responds as she walks up next to me, a slight smirk on her face...

"As long as we don't get lost on the way..." I chuckle as I turn to her.

"You won't get lost if you'll listen to me." Saya retorts with a frown as she also turns to me.

"True that. I just hope they have earplug type radios we can use. Holding a slipper-sized radio while trying to shoot is bound to end bad." I answer as I nod, then shrug.

"We can ask Papa, now let's go." Saya turns to walk towards the exit without waiting for a response.

"Wonder if I should take a camera attachment for the helmet too..." I say in a low tone as I also start to walk.

"Hmm? Why would you need that?" Saeko asks as she keeps her pace next to me.

"Because your dad wants proof of, something? I honestly don't know what he expects of me to be honest..." I answer as I turn towards our purple-haired samurai. Saeko blinks at me a few times, then starts giggling.

"Are you sure that is a good idea?" She asks as she leans towards me.

"After all. It will be, just the two of us~." She whispers as we exit the building.

"And a battalion of corpses." I respond as I glance at her. Saeko just giggles again.

"Are you going to protect me from them?" She 'asks' with a smile.

"W, will you two stop whispering like a bunch of schoolgirls? Walk faster." Saya groans as she turns around to look at the two of us with a pouty frown. Saeko just leans back away from me without saying anything.

(... Me protecting you during a fight? What, we roleplaying now?)

And with a steady pace, we then made it to the bridge...

Upon getting to the front part of the building and seeing the bridge, we found Saya's parents waiting there, along with what seemed to be two more teams of four. Rika was also there, among a bunch of

soldiers that made up one of the two teams, the left one. The only difference between the two teams being that the right one had three men in lab coats, and was missing one cigar-smoking sniper woman.

(Huh, Rika is here as well. Don't think I can make out any of the other people though. Then again, I didn't really 'know' anybody else...)

And once we got closer to them...

"So we'll go by boat now, but the extraction will be via a helicopter from the top of the hospital? Why can't we just go and leave by helicopter?" I hear one of the soldiers in the right team ask.

"Because if we go there via helicopter, then the infected will start swarming the building before we can even have the chance to start looking into it. It'll be hard enough as it is. We don't need an added time limit. The materials we're looking for need careful handling." One of the lab coats answers. The soldier that asked, just scoffs.

"This is going to be 'amazing'." The same soldier adds with a sarcastic tone as he walks to the edge of the sidewalk, then starts climbing down a ladder, disappearing from my field of view. Followed shortly after by the rest of his team.

By that time, I and the two girls were next to the only remaining team. Souichiro had also taken notice of us and was waiting for us to get closer.

"Only three people? You know you might have to clear the whole building if it's infested." He asks as he folds his arms.

"I didn't know anybody else. And, Saya will be staying behind, I want her at communications if possible." I respond flatly.

"Ahh? You didn't know anybody else? Naier you're breaking my heart. Thinking that you didn't tell me to come along." I hear Rika speak up with a slight chuckle.

"Uhh, because I like 'not' getting stabbed in my sleep." I respond as I glance at Rika, who responds by chuckling again.

"Minami come on. We have to move." One of the other soldiers shakes her shoulder as he points at the ladder the lab coats used some time ago.

"Ai, ai. Good luck out there commando." Rika throws a lax salute at me before turning to follow the soldier who shook her.

"Are you sure you want just two people to go on this? We could ask some of our men to come with you." Saya's mother speaks up as she looks at us. Saya blinking a few times before opening her mouth.

"Thank you for your concern. But I believe we can do this as is." Saeko then responds before Saya could speak, causing the pinkette to turn towards Saeko with a pout.

"If you believe this is enough, then I won't press the matter more. If you're ready then head down the ladder. A boat will take you to the closest point the river can get you. Then you'll go on foot." Shouchiro folds his arms as he looks at me.

"Any questions?" He adds.

"Uhh, actually yes. Not a question though. Do we have any sort of 'earplug' radios? I intend to do this silently, a normal radio will be too loud. And too cumbersome." I respond.

"I'll see what they can bring you with the boat. Anything else?" He asks again.

(... He asked, so...)

"A riot shield and a helmet flashlight?" I ask back. To my surprise, Shouchiro just nods...

(Huh, I was half-joking, but. Why not, could be helpful.)

"Uhh, that's all I can think of." I add as I narrow my eyes and look towards the ground, trying to think of anything else I could use.

(Shotgun, too loud. And I can't use it if Saeko is in front of me. Too late for a handgun silencer, as I need one compatible with my handgun. I already have a sword, and a knife. Asked for a flashlight and radio. And well, I got to think of the total weight too, I ain't no Dragonborn to carry an actual armory in my magical subspace storage.)

"Yea, that'd be all." I add as I turn to look back towards Saya's dad.

"Head down the ladder then. Saya, you know where the coms are at." Shouchiro responds. Saya just nods and starts heading towards the airport tower without saying anything.

(Well, here we go...)

I walk up to the edge of the road and look down.

A ladder went down the wall, about twenty to thirty meters in height, until it reached a small, sea-level platform...

With that, I and Saeko started going down the ladder...

(Can somebody play me some metal gear solid music? Or, uhh, actually this ladder is too short. It doesn't deserve such fame. Scratch the music.)

After reaching the bottom, I walk to the side to let Saeko get down. And yea, she was wearing a skirt and was coming down after me, and no, I did not look up...

"Well, now we wait..." I say as I look down towards the sea's depths. Though I could only see a deep blue color...

(Pretty deep considering it's next to the shore.)

"The air down here is pretty strong, I keep getting sea droplets on my face." Saeko adds as she closes her eyes, then pulls her waving hair back, tying them in a ponytail.

"Sorry, but the mask is one thing I ain't giving." I respond as I raise my finger, Saeko just chuckles lightly.

"You don't need to, I don't mind the feeling." She responds as she keeps her eyes closed.

"Though, that could spell trouble for the gun..." I take my glove off to feel where the wind was blowing from, then cover the Scar-H under my jacket, tucking it from the opposite side of where the wind was blowing from.

"Is it that bad if seawater touches the gun?" Saeko asks as she opens her eyes, then turns to me.

"As bad as it would be leaving the sword with sea droplets on the blade. While the scar 'can' shoot if it gets water or sand in it, you don't want to just leave it as is, especially saltwater. While most new guns are made of aluminum, which does not rust. It can still get corroded. The polymer parts might handle the seawater better, but the barrel is obviously not made out of polymer." I respond as I turn to her.

"I see, should I do something about this then?" She asks as she turns her hip to show me the beretta handgun that was strapped on it.

"It's in the holster, it should be fine." I respond, Saeko just nods back at me before turning to look towards the open sea again...

And, a few seconds passed with Saeko staring at the sea in silence.

(... I don't know if it's the wind blowing her hair, or that other than her, the only other thing I can see from this angle is the sea. But this, is quite the sight...)

I didn't get to stare at the scene for too long though. As soon after, a rigid inflatable boat drove up to us from the airport, a soldier I have never seen before in it.

"Cinema?" The driver asks, I nod back.

"Get in, your equipment is on the back of the boat, next to the seats." He responds as he points his thumb behind him.

And with that, both I and Saeko get on the boat. The driver then started, driving.

"He actually brought everything I asked, marked me impressed." I whistle as I pick up the riot shield that was laid against the back seat to my right.

"I would have asked for a power armor and a jetpack if I knew he'd actually bring them." I add nonchalantly as I pick two earbuds, two small wireless mics and a helmet flashlight that were on the seat. Then hand one earbud and mic to Saeko.

"Thank you." She smiles at me and takes the items before seating herself.

(Hmm, the earbud has a small button on the top, you press this to speak? Gonna be a pain to press it under the balaclava and helmet. O well...)

And as I took a seat myself, I passed the earbud under the balaclava, before attaching it to my ear. Then attached the mic on the collar of my shirt. After that I pass my hand under the helmet and press on where the button should be at.

"Does this thing work?" I ask.

"I can hear you from my own earplug." Saeko responds.

" *Why wouldn't it work? Did you manage to break it already?* " I hear another voice respond...

(Moody chundere has joined the chat.)

"Just had to make sure, no need to bite." I respond, only getting a 'Hum' as an answer...

(And the flashlight, as my helmet does not have any rails, the flashlight itself has an elastic band I can use to strap it on the helm.)

" Once you're out of the boat, find a sign with an address so I can pinpoint your location. I'll tell you the path you need to take then. "
Saya speaks up as I put the riot shield on my legs.

"Ai." I respond...

And then, silence. With not much to do, I turned to look towards the open sea to my left...

(I feel like I'm going to the dentist. A dead, brain munching dentist...)

After a couple of minutes of driving on the open water, the driver drove the boat into the river that separated the central and rightmost landmass. The scenery changing too, two giant concrete walls...

I reflexively looked up as we started going down the canal.

"Uhh, I see corpses leaning against the railings over our heads." I say as I keep looking up...

"Probably attracted by the noise of the boats that passed before us." The driver responds with a shrug. I nod and pass the shield over my right arm as I keep looking up.

(Last thing I need is a flying corpse landing on my head...)

"Hmm? Another boat is coming our way." Saeko then speaks up as she points ahead.

And sure enough, a boat with no passengers passed by us shortly after, going in the opposite direction compared to us...

"How many teams did they send out?..." I ask as I turn to look behind me, towards the boat that was now picking distance from us.

"Uhh, six? Seven? Not sure." The driver answers.

(Huh, wait. If we count the power station, that'd be four teams. One for the power station, one for the cinema, one for the hospital, and one for the gas station. What about the other two, or three teams?)

"You know what they were sent out for?" I ask again. The driver just shrugs.

"Nope, don't really care to know either. My job is to drive people and return. Don't need to fill my head with information I don't need." He adds as he tilts his head, his eyes locked on the river ahead...

"Still, since we're speaking. If I can ask. How come you took such a younger person with you for this mission?" The driver asks as he turns to me.

"I don't mean to be disrespectful, but you look like a high school student." He adds as he turns to Saeko.

(... Younger? Whut? And didn't you just say you don't need 'useless' information a few seconds ago?...)

"Uhh, I was with her since day one of the outbreak, we'll have better coordination compared to teaming up with somebody I don't know. Also, she is not 'younger' than me, we're the same age..." I respond as I look up again.

"Huh, really? You seem a bit, large for your age then. Because with all that armor you're wearing, it's all I can honestly make out." The driver arcs an eyebrow as he turns to look back ahead.

"I'm a foreigner. Probably why I look bigger than your average Japanese person of the same age." I say with a shrug...

"Ehh? Could be because your voice is a bit muffled, but you don't sound like one." The driver responds with a chuckle.

(Well, Japanese are supposed to be what, the average height of Saya's? One sixty or so. Saeko is really the black sheep in that aspect. And Saya's parents. I mean, scary dad himself is taller than me...)

Another couple of minutes then passed in silence, until...

"And here we are. See the ladder to the right? That's my stop." The driver raises his hand and points ahead, a single ladder a couple of meters away to our right. I nod and get up, Saeko doing the same.

"I see some corpses around the railing next to the ladder's top end. This, is going to be a pain..." I groan as I keep looking at the ladder. I could see three corpses, arms stretched towards the river, upper bodies bent over the railing 'aiming' towards the river.

"You have a gun, use it." The driver turns to me as he stops the boat by the ladder.

"Too loud, I have another idea." I shook my head as I passed the shield handle over my arm, until it was to my elbow.

"Once we get on the ladder, leave." I add as I grab on the ladder.

"You don't have to tell me twice." The driver responds with a nod.

And with that, I start climbing up as, silently as I can.

(Ok, we have one to the right, two to the left. I can knife them, or pull them. They're already half over the railing, won't be too hard to make them topple over...)

After I reached near the top of the ladder, close enough for the corpses to almost reach me, I stopped, and turned to look down, Saeko looking at me with a serious expression, the boat already moving back the way it came.

I nod, and look back up. The three corpses still not paying any real attention to me, just flailing their arms around lazily. I let out a silent breath and turned to the right one, then waited...

After a few seconds passed, and I got the feel of how it kept swaying its arms around, I waited for the moment its right arm was the closest to me, before grabbing it by the forearm. To my surprise, the corpse did not seem to pay too much attention to the fact that I just grabbed it, too much blood in its dead brain I guess? And before it could turn to 'stare' towards me, I tightened my grip on the ladder and pulled myself down and back, dragging the corpse along, to the point that its whole body went over the railing. And, with what I can only call a lazy groan, the corpse plummeted towards the river, seeming ever oblivious...

I then quickly turn to look at the other two corpses to the left, who were now both looking towards the railing where the other corpse was on a few seconds ago. With a groan, and their bodies still half over the railing. They started to slowly grind themselves towards the now empty railing, and towards the small opening between the railings and the ladder.

(Shit, they'll fall on us like this.)

I quickly climbed up the ladder, grabbing the right railing to give myself a boost up, and the moment I touched solid ground, I slammed my left side, which had the riot shield on, at the corpses. And instead of falling back, I then pushed forward a few steps. And judging how they got off the railing, and the closest one grabbed on the riot shield as it started to groan loudly, I also got their attention as well.

"Saeko." I glanced behind me to see that Saeko had already climbed up, sword in hand...

Without speaking, she walks up to my right. Brings the sword's hilt next to her face, and stabs the first corpse in the side of its skull. As she pulls the sword back, she takes another step to her right, taking

a vertical slash at the second corpse. Separating its neck, and part of its shoulder...

She then takes a step back, and with a single sword twirl, she sheaths her blade with a smirk.

"I am not going to lie, I was looking forward to this." She adds as she turns to me, the smirk still on her face.

"Just, don't let 'too' lose ah. Don't want to have to search for you in an infected town." I respond with a chuckle. Saeko just lets out a small giggle as well.

"Hmm, I thought I already told you. I find it much more pleasurable when I can fight in coordination with you." She chimes as she walks up next to me, slightly running her fingers on my arm, before turning to stop right behind me.

"Let's, find a street sign..." I clear my throat as I turn to look around me. Saeko, just chuckled.

Right now we were in a small, square opening. A narrow walkway next to the railing that extended to the left and right, both sides seemingly clear of corpses. Along with a single walkway right ahead of us, which was blocked by a closed metal door, a couple of corpses pushing up against said door. Other than that, concrete fence walls, along with a house both to the left, and to the right.

(Another residential area?)

"Any idea where we should head off to?" Saeko asks as she walks up next to me.

"Uhh, an address sign should be in front of the houses right?" I respond with a question as I turn to her. She nods.

"You want me to clear the way?" She asks again as she points at the closed metal door...

(Uhh. One corpse on the floor, two standing upright, pushing the door. I think there are more behind them as well...)

"That, or we can just climb up a wall and walk to the front. Check how bad the streets are first." I respond as I point at the walls. Saeko nods as she takes her hand off the blade's hilt.

With that, I walk up to the right wall, and with a short jump, I climb up...

(And the shield is being annoying...)

I pushed the shield further up my arm to free my movement, while in the meantime Saeko climbed up behind me.

"This house is probably as safe as the streets. Better we stay on the wall if you don't want to fight." She whispers as she looks to her right, patches of blood on the grassy floor that surrounded the house, along with a crashed window that led inside the house.

"Use the microphone from now on. Better than trying to loudly whisper." I respond as I press the button on the earbud.

" *Oh, right.* " Saeko's voice responds through the earbud.

" *Huh, did you reach your stop?* " I heard another voice ask.

"Uhh. Yea, looking for a street sight now." I respond with a slight groan.

" *W, what? What are you groaning for? Got a problem that I asked?* " Saya asks with an annoyed tone right after.

"What? No, it's just a pain to press the mic button every time I want to speak." I respond, as I press the button again...

" *Uhh, why don't you just keep it pressed for a few seconds? It locks the mic to always open.* " Saya asks with a 'Are you stupid?' tone. I stayed silent, and did as she said...

"Can you two hear me?" I ask a few seconds later as I let go of the earbud button.

"Yea." Saya responds.

"Yes." Saeko adds right after.

"Hmm, weird..." I say as I tilt my head.

"What is it this time?" Saya asks with a slight groan.

"Your voices sound, clearer for some reason..." I add...

(Why do I have the sudden urge to call somebody a lazy ass?...)

"Well whatever, let's move." I glance behind me to see Saeko nod. Then turn to walk ahead, past the door, past the corpses behind the door, and to the front of the house, next to the actual street. And...

"Uhh, well, we're not going this way..." I whisper as I keep looking at the road. Or what used to be a road...

Let's just say, when you can see house appliances like kitchens and fridges tossed around the middle of the road, you know things are bad...

"The road looks like a children's playground, in a bad way. It'd be a miracle if we don't trip over something after every two steps, let alone bump into a corpse..." I add as I keep looking around.

"Just look at one of the street signs, I can tell you how you can get to the cinema, but I first need to find where exactly you're at." Saya responds.

"Ai." I nod as I keep looking around...

And, after some scanning. I spotted a street sign on the opposite street, on a wall next to a door that led inside a house...

(Hmm. The thing is too small to see from here...)

I take the rifle, and look through the scope...

(Much better.)

"Uhh, Shingi Whinetaro. 4-1-5 riverside. Tutu? Chutu? Mewtwo? Can't make the rest, there's blood splatter on it..." I say as I narrow my eyes...

"Wait a sec." Saya responds. And, a few minutes later...

"Ok, got it." She speaks up.

"You are, hmm. Five intersections away. Not too far considering." She adds.

"Yea, I just hope the rest of the streets are not as bad as this one..." I say as I tilt my head.

"Right, uhh, what way 'can' you go right now?" Saya asks.

"We have a clear walkway that can take us further up the riverside." I respond.

"Ok, take that, if you can reach the next intersection tell me." Saya responds.

"Ai." I say I turn around, motioning Saeko to fall back. She nods and turns around.

"Oh and, don't even think of turning the microphone off." Saya adds as we start to move.

"Uhh, because?" I ask.

"B, because you'll probably do something weird to Saeko if I don't have my eye on you." Saya retorts.

"Humm, weird? Like, what?" Saeko asks, a slight smirk on her face.

"Uhh, y, you know. Weird, stuff..." Saya stutters as her voice drops a few decibels. Saeko, just keeps giggling silently as she drops down to the square opening we started at...

After I also jumped down, we started going up the narrow alleyway...

A couple of meters later, we came up another square opening, this one completely clear of corpses.

"Want to check this door?" Saeko asks as she turns to look at another metal door to our right.

"No point, it leads to the same fucked up road. Let's keep going straight." I respond as I shake my head. Saeko just nods, and keeps moving ahead of me...

Yet, we only managed to take a few steps ahead this time, before we saw a corpse popping up from the wall to our right, or, what probably is the next small opening between the houses.

"Wait, let me go first. I have the riot shield, easier to block if more of them charge from a blind spot." I say as I put my hand on Saeko's shoulder.

"Hmm, my very own knight in shining armor." She responds with a giggle.

"Please, knights and rainbows are a Takashi thing. I'm closer to the hooded nut job that's silently stabbing everybody to death with an oversized sharp stick." I reply with a chuckle...

"Pffrt! ***Cough* *cough*** . Akch. Warn me when you're about to say stupid things you idiot. I nearly drenched the keyboard with water because of you." I hear a whiny voice retort.

"Humm, actually, now that I think about it, I think I like that more than a knight." Saeko whispers as she leans towards me.

"H, hey! Don't feed his stupidity! Saying stuff like that..." Saya added with the same whiny voice, though the whine, ended with a whisper.

I shake my head, and pull the shield from my arm to my hand, then take the knife on the other hand for good measure, before silently walking towards the corpse, shield on the ready...

The moment I got close to the corpse, and the next opening, I glanced to my right.

(One more corpse standing there.)

I nod, and I turn to look at the corpse next to me. Its back still turned to me.

(Well, here goes nothing.)

I take a deep breath, and with a strong slam. I bash the shield on the nearby corpse's back, sending it a few steps ahead, towards the railing that overlooked the river below. And with a quick step back, I then take another step forward, and stomp it right on the lower section of its back. Sending it tumbling over the railing.

With a quick glance behind me, I find the second corpse now shambling with a quick pace towards me, arms stretched. Not losing momentum I quickly turned around, using the force of the turn to take a full swing on the corpse's side with the shield, sending it tumbling to my right, and right next to Saeko's feet, who then proceeded to casually stab the thing in the head...

With no other corpses around, I turn to look towards the river. The corpse I sent flying, now nowhere to be seen...

"Uhh, I think this shield is invoking a 'police brutality' spirit in me." I say as I turn towards Saeko. Who just chuckled in response.

"Did you do something stupid again?" I hear Saya ask.

"Define stupid." I 'ask' as I motion Saeko with my head to move, getting a groan from Saya as a response...

(Huh, so that's how 'item skills' work, who knew...)

With that, we kept moving ahead. Until we reached the end of the alleyway. A bridge to our left, a short road that led to an intersection to our right.

"Doesn't look like the bridge we used with the car. This one's completely blocked off..." I whisper as I look at the roadblocked bridge. Several cement barricades set up along its width, along with two firefighter trucks, and three 'swat' trucks behind the barricade. The occupants of said vehicles wandering around in various states of 'dead'.

"As much as I'd like to pick these corpses clean of their equipment. I'm already carrying enough. And I don't think their guns use my type of ammo. Except for maybe the handgun..." I add as I keep looking past the barricade.

"Saya, we're by the intersection." I add as I walk up to the middle of the road to get a better look at the intersection.

"Can you pass it?" She asks.

"Yea." I respond with a slight nod.

"Ok, then go past that, and keep going straight, if you find no obstacles, you'll then go left after three intersections. The cinema should be two intersections straight after that, to your right." Saya then continues.

"Alright, so. Let's go see a movie then?" I 'ask' as I turn to Saeko and motion her with my hand.

"Hmm, I wonder what you will take me to see." Saeko responds with a slight chuckle as she walks up right next to me with a smile...

(The Nervous lost puppy and the Swagging machine obviously)

Movie night pt2

"So, three intersections straight, then two up." I whisper as I look at the intersection ahead of us, a couple of corpses aimlessly wandering around it.

(No cars around this intersection. Almost as if everybody managed to escape to the bridge behind us. Or, nobody made it this far...)

"Have a plan?" Saeko, who was right next to me, asks after a few seconds.

"Uhh, the right side looks less populated, we can just, blitz through. I see what, four corpses spread out around the right part of the intersection. I could just shoot them and be done with it, but that would make the corpses on the road ahead to start moving towards us. And as it's the road we need to take, I'd rather have the corpses there stand still while we pass." I turn to Saeko as I speak. And, just as I finish speaking, Saeko draws her sword, and licks her lips with a slight smirk...

"So then you will not mind? If I am the one to deal with this!" And her smirk turns into a full-blown grin as she charges straight towards the nearest corpses to the right, not really waiting for any sort of response from me...

(I suppose this was a, rhetorical question? Seeing that she didn't wait for my answer. Uhh, I guess she really does not want to miss her chance to 'let loose'...)

The moment Saeko closed in on the first corpse, she took a running swing at its neck, decapitating it in one clean sweep. Using the momentum of her first swing, she hunches her body forward and makes a small 'dash jump' forward, closing in to the next corpse. Which didn't even manage to turn around before its head was also rolling in the air. With her body still hunched forward, in a semi

crouched position, she leaped again, towards the third corpse. Landing her boot's heel square flat in its face, an audible 'crack' as the corpse hit the ground head first, while she used said head to spring herself back, landing a few meters back. After she quickly glanced around, spotting the fourth, and last corpse in our 'way', she casually turned around to walk towards it. With a smirk on her face, she took a couple of steps towards it, before making a horizontal swing with one hand, causing the blade in her hand to make yet another head fly. All that, while I was trying to reach her...

(... Did I ever mention how it feels like I'm using cheat codes when Saeko is around?...)

The smirk still on her face, she turns her head slightly towards me. I motion her with my hand to keep moving forward to the next street. She nods and turns to charge ahead. To the nearest lone sorry corpse that happened to be on the street ahead of us. I, don't need to mention how the thing ended up becoming headless, before it could even realize who was next to it...

(... At least she's not screaming that she's wet right now...)

The road ahead was thankfully clear enough, even without Saeko 'letting loose'...

So like that, we reached the next intersection. Or to be more precise, I chased Saeko to the next intersection, who stopped right before it.

"Straight, again?" She asks as she turns to me. Her face visibly flushed as she took short, quick breaths.

"Yea two more intersections straight. Try no..." She responds to me with a nod and starts running ahead again, before I could finish...

(... And she blasted off, again...)

-Ten minutes later-

(This must have been the quickest trip towards a location post-outbreak so far...)

"The cinema should be on the street you are on. Do you see it? " Saya asks as I and Saeko keep running, with Saeko now next to me. Who thankfully, seemed to have 'calmed down'...

"Yea. There, to our left, the big whiteboard a couple of meters down." I speak up as I keep running...

"I see it." Saeko also responds as she nods.

"So? Is the front door open?" Saya asks right after.

"Give me a sec. We're not there yet." I answer.

"Alright, be careful." I hear Saya reply.

(Huh, I sort of expected something among the lines 'then hurry up you idiot'. Mark me surprised.)

And while I was thinking that, Saeko stops running, her sight aimed towards the cinema's front door.

"The front doors are wide open." She adds as I also stop and turn to look towards the cinema's entrance.

(Looks clear inside too. From here at least.)

"Alright, let's go. Standing still here ain't going to help us figure out how the insides are. We're going in, and closing the doors behind us." I say as I glance at Saeko and start moving ahead of her. Without responding, Saeko starts running behind me.

After running past a few shambling corpses, we reached the cinema's ticket booth which was on the sidewalk in front of the cinema. After running past it, we headed inside the cinema.

"Close the doors, I'll find something to block it." I point at the big double door we just entered before moving deeper inside the main room...

A spacious rectangle-shaped room, extending to the left and right. Ahead of me, to the other side of the room, a counter that used to sell popcorn, drinks, and sweets. Probably at exorbitant 'cinema' prices. On the left and right ends of the wall behind the counter, the start of two relatively wide-looking hallways, a thick red carpet visible where said hallways started. Between me and the counter, a few metal pylons that connected to each other with long, thin ropes. Creating a 'path' that led to the counter's open cash register.

(Looks clear. But no time to check more thoroughly right now. No corpses standing 'guard', so it'll do till we block the door.)

I head to the nearest pilon and grab it. Shaking it slightly to make sure it was not bolted on the ground before lifting it. Then head to the first pilon it was connected to.

(Could use the rope too.)

I look at the second pilon in order to find a way to release the rope it was holding...

(Uhh, fuck it...)

But end up just cutting it with my blade instead. I then run back to the door, which was now closed by Saeko.

"The central part of the doors looks to be some sort of glass. You think it will be able to hold the corpses off?" Saeko asks as I start tying the rope through the door handles.

"Uhh, not if they charge at it en masse. But I only see one, maybe two corpses coming towards the door. Hmm, better if we don't risk it though." I nod as I turn to look around the room again. My sight stopping at what seemed to be a small lounge area on the right side

of the room. Several tables with cozy-looking armchairs lined up around them. Along with a few two-seater sofas.

"Let's push the sofas up against the door." I point to my right as I look at Saeko. She just nods, and we both run-up to the lounge area.

"I'm going to assume that the cinema is abandoned with how you found the doors open?" I hear Saya speak up.

"Yea, no corpses in the first room either, no idea what's deeper in though..." I respond as I turn to look towards the hallway with the carpet floor that was now to my left, and stop dead in my tracks...

(Oh holy shit. Hello darkness my old friend?)

"Naier? Is something wrong?" Saeko asks after a few seconds of silence. Turning to her, I find her looking at me from behind one of the sofas, slightly bending over with her arms stretched, ready to push said sofa.

"Uhh sorry. Just noticed that the cinema might not have windows deeper in, it's pitch black deeper in..." I respond as I move towards the same sofa, keeping my eyes towards the pitch-black hallway. Saeko tilts her head and turns to look at the hallway as well, letting out a small 'oh' in response.

"No matter, I have the flashlight, we should be fine." I shake my head as I go next to Saeko and get ready to push the couch...

"What, you're scared of the dark?" I hear a cheeky voice ask through the earbud.

"I should be, we all should be. Corpses can't see. Pitch black darkness does nothing to hinder them, it only makes it harder for us." I respond as we start pushing.

"I agree, a single bite can mean our end. If we get caught by surprise and they manage to get to us before we realize it, it can become our

death sentence. Especially in a building." Saeko adds after me.

"O, ok ok, I get it. I was just joking, you don't have to hound me..."
Saya responds with a slight whine.

And with that, we push the sofa in front of the door, then push a second one as well for good measure, and place two tables against it as well...

"Alright. Saya, the front entrance is blocked off, it's no longer a viable entry, or exit point." I say as we finish setting the barricade, then turn to look at the room once more with a slight sigh.

"Mhm, ok." I hear Saya respond.

"Also, for the map I mentioned before. Can you note some stuff down?" I ask right after.

"Tell me." Saya replies flatly.

"The first room seems to be a wide rectangular, we have two hallways on the wall ahead of the entrance, to the left and right corners. Uhh, I see two doors with bathroom signs on the left wall of the room, the right side has a small lounge. On the wall at the opposite side of the entrance there's also a long counter that sold snacks and crap. A door behind it as well." I respond as I start looking around the room...

And after a minute or so.

"Anything else?" Saya asks again.

"Hmm, let's see..." I whisper as I look around the room again.

(There are a couple of potted plants around, the floor is also a relative mess with snack packages...)

I walk up to the counter, and lean behind it.

(Clear. And, the counter still has edible stuff, both on it, and on the glass display under it. The popcorn machine is empty, though there's a giant ass sack of what I suppose is filled corn kernels next to it. Everything else probably needs electricity to work, like the soda dispenser, and what I think is a small oven? Wait, why is there an oven here? Cooked marshmallows?)

"The room seems clear of corpses, the counter still has packaged snacks and sweets you normally find in cinemas. Along with a small oven, soda dispenser and popcorn machine, no idea if they will still function if you can supply them with electricity. And a sack of corn kernels. I suspect the door behind the counter has more supplies. And if that's the case, I then hope the soldiers like corn, because it's probably going to be on the menu for a long time..." I chuckle as I lean away from the counter.

"Want us to check?" I ask right after.

"If possible, I'd like to have all the information I can for when I go to papa to show him what we found..." Saya responds.

"Aight." I nod, and turn to Saeko, who nods back at me.

With that, we move past the counter, and to the single closed door behind it.

"Big chance the insides are pitch black here." I say as I open the flashlight on my helmet, grabbing the door's handle in the process.

And then, I slowly twist the door handle, before lightly pushing the door, making it silently slide open.

(And yep, pitch-black alright...)

The only thing I could see, was that the room continued on for quite a bit. Metal, three-layer shelves separating the room into narrow hallways. On the shelves, boxes, sacks, and equipment such as cleaning tools, repair tools, and what I suspect to be older

appliances that the counter used, seeing that they had a thick coat of dust on them, or were cannibalized for parts.

I turn to Saeko and motion her to be silent with my hand, then point to move inside. She nods with a serious expression before entering the room with me.

Shield on the ready, I start scanning the insides as we move deeper in.

(I don't hear groaning, munching, or smell anything. I can't see any corpses or blood either. Looks like this place is clear...)

"I'm going to slam my hand on a shelf to see if anything will react, can you close the door behind us for a sec? Don't want the sound to echo throughout the whole building." I whisper.

"Alright." Saeko replies.

And as I said, the moment the room turned even darker, after Saeko closed the door and snuffed out the only light source other than my flashlight. I free my 'sword arm' by holding the blade with the same hand that had the shield on, and slap my hand on a shelf next to me. But not very loudly, in order to avoid causing unnecessary noise.

"Alright. Open the door and stay next to it." I speak up as I take a few steps back, until I was next to the purple-haired samurai, who did as I asked.

We then waited for a few seconds, the seconds then turning to a minute.

"Hmm, don't see anything reacting, think we're good." I whisper as I turn to look behind me.

"Could really fucking help if we had actual lighting though." I add as I look back inside the dark room.

"Alright, I'll note it down as food storage?" Saya asks right after.

"Yea," I nod as I turn to Saeko, then motion her with my head to move back out.

Closing the door behind us, we head back to the center of the main room.

"Where to next?" Saeko asks.

"Let's check the bathrooms, just to make sure." I respond as I point at the two doors to our right side of the room. Saeko nods at me, and starts moving towards said doors.

While heading over there myself, I glance at the hallway on the right corner of the room...

(As dark as the other one huh...)

Once I got next to the girl's bathroom door, which Saeko was aiming to open. She nodded, and swung the door open. And we both ended up, staring...

"Uhh, pervert alert?" I whisper as I tilt my head slightly, looking at the lone, male corpse. Pants down to its knees. Its arms covered with some sort of makeshift armor made from magazines. And seeing how I didn't see any magazines around, he either got here post-outbreak, or looted every single magazine in the building...

"Such an unsightly view." Saeko narrows her eyes slightly as she casually enters the bathroom, heading straight towards the corpse, which was now turning to head towards us...

"What?" Saya asks right after with a questioning tone...

And well, I did say it was heading towards us. But, it ended up tripping on its own pants the moment it tried to move, ending up headfirst on the floor with a loud 'thud'. Not losing the chance, Saeko

walks up next to it and jams the tip of her blade on the back of its head.

She, must have been a bit 'too' into it too, as she failed to see that the bathroom stall next to her, the one that the corpse was standing next to, was starting to slide open. Bloody hand marks on the inside part of the door becoming visible as the door silently slid open...

(Huh? Blood marks on the inside of the door? Oh shit!)

I quickly close in to Saeko, who was still looking at the corpse on the floor, and grab her by the shoulder. The moment I tried to pull her back, a single female corpse jumped out of the stall, straight towards Saeko. And, other than the sound of, fabric ripping? It thankfully charged right past her, slamming itself on the mirror that was right over the sinks, cracking it into pieces before slightly bending over as it slid its head inside the sink with a groan...

Before it could stand back up completely. I quickly walk up behind it, and slam its head on the corner of the sink. Pulling the combat knife as I held it down, and stabbing it on the backside of its neck. The corpse turning limp shortly after...

"Well, that escalated quickly..." I whisper as I look at the corpse, my sight stopping at its hand. A black ribbon in its grip...

"Huh? Weird thing to be holding, did she turn while dressing up?" I peel the ribbon off its hand as I glance at the rest of the room, then turn to Saeko...

(... Still, I get the feeling I seen th... Oh...)

Saeko was standing completely still, staring down at her own shirt. Or, to be more precise, staring at her own bra which was now in full view for the world, as her shirt decided it was time for it to stop doing its job. Giving me a pretty good view of, what's normally underneath it...

"Uhh, I think this is yours?" I speak up as I turn to look at my left, only to end up looking at the now cracked mirror. And at Saeko, again...

Saeko, seemingly snapping out of whatever trance she was in, tries to button up her shirt again, a slight blush appearing on her face...

"... Ahh, most of the buttons got, ripped off..." She adds after a few seconds with a soft tone...

"Hey! Will you tell me what's going on already?" Saya asks again with a slightly annoyed tone.

"Uhh, a corpse just ripped Saeko's shirt." I respond casually.

"Wha? And why are you so calm about it you pervert!" Saya shouts back in my ear.

(Because I have seen her in way more provocative clothes? Because she has said way more provocative things in these provocative clothes? We're also in a hostile location...)

"Are you hurt?" I ask as I take off my shield, then start to take off my jacket.

"Umm, no, it just managed to get the ribbon and part of my shirt..." Saeko responds as she keeps her shirt closed with one hand, averting to look straight at me as she speaks.

"Here, doubt it's your size though. Uhh, time I found to have no spare clothes in my bag..." I reply as I extend my arm, my jacket on it.

"I am sorry. I, lost my focus..." Saeko lowers her head slightly, taking the jacket off my arm, her face still flushed as she turns her back to me.

"Don't even think of doing anything creepy to her you hear!" Saya then barks at my ear.

"What? I wouldn't do something like that." I respond as I fold my arms, turning to look around the rest of the stalls once more, Saya letting out a sigh.

"I mean we found corpses here, that means we're in an overrun building right now..." I add.

"Ohh? So if the building was no longer overrun you, would?" I hear Saeko ask while she was still with her back turned to me, whatever embarrassment she 'probably' had seemingly been thrown out the window...

"D, don't feed his pervertedness Saeko!" Saya shouts right after...

"... Did you just shout that in a room full of people Saya?..." I ask as I fold my arms.

"O, of course not! I'm in a room by myself..." She quickly responds .

(Just hope that room has good sound insulation, or I'll get arrested for sexual harassment because of her...)

"Hmm, I think this is the best I can do for now. I will have to ask somebody to fix it after we return..." Saeko then speaks up as she turns to me...

The black jacket's front zipper closed up to right under her chest, where her white school shirt then took over, or at least. It partly took over, as there was still a gap where I could still clearly see her bra, and cleavage...

(... Now 'I' will have problems focusing...)

A few seconds passed in silence...

"P, please do not stare so much..." Saeko speaks up as she tries to close the gap on her shirt with her hand. Her sentence getting followed by some incomprehensible 'sounds' made by Saya...

(Oh, 'now' you're acting embarrassed again...)

I take a deep breath before letting out a sigh.

"Ask a fat kid to ignore an ice cream cake on a scorching hot day would you..." I whisper as I start walking towards the exit. Motioning Saeko with my head, who just responded by questionably tilting her head. The 'gap' in her shirt popping up again the moment she let go of her shirt...

"Ok, uhh. Let's check the other bathroom, then head towards the hallway. Hopefully, without any more wardrobe malfunctions..." I say as I walk out of the girls bathroom.

"S,shut up you pervert." Saya responds with a rather whiny tone.

(How am 'I' the pervert in all of this? I didn't even really 'do' anything...)

Without responding, I head to the men's door. And open it...

(Clear...)

I then kneel down to look through the stall's gap...

(Also clear...)

"Bathrooms are clear." I say with a flat tone...

"Now. Hallway..." I add as I turn my head towards the dark hallway...

(Looking from here, the walls also look, carpety. Guess for better sound insulation?)

"Hmm, as I am the only one with a flashlight, stay either next, or behind me. Don't attack anything that might be ahead of us." I say as I glance at Saeko...

(Head on head level, Naier. You need to stay focused, and provocatively posing Saeko's swimming through your head is not the type of focused you need right now...)

"Very well. I will watch our rear. The light coming from here should let me see any corpse silhouette if they end up behind us." She responds with a nod.

"Uhh, ok then. Pitch black hallway time, what could possibly go wrong..." I whisper as I start walking, getting a small chuckle as a response from Saeko...

I stop at the edge of the dark hallway, letting the flashlight shine a dim light deeper inside...

(I don't see anything moving. But, ughh. The whole hallway has a deep red color because of the carpet, even the damn ceiling is like that. And freak factor aside, that also means I can't make out any blood on the floor, if there is any.)

I motion Saeko with my hand, and we start walking deeper into the hallway...

(Feels like I'm walking inside an 'organic' cave. Ughh...)

And, after walking a little deeper in...

"I think I see a door to our right. A cinema room if I had to take a guess." I speak up as I point at a closed, heavy-looking double door that was a few meters ahead and to our right.

"Should we check it?" Saeko asks right after.

"Yea, I want to see the size of the room inside. The hallway is not too deep, probably one maybe two more rooms. I also see no doors to our left from here, so there's a good chance that this hallway circles around to the other hallway we saw, and the doors in that hallway either lead to new rooms, or are connected to the same rooms as

the doors here." I respond, and turn to Saeko. Flashing the light straight to her face and causing her to close her eyes with a slight wince as she covered her eyes.

"Crap, sorry." I quickly cover the flashlight as I lower my head slightly. My sight, going straight towards her, 'wardrobe malfunction'...

(Purple. Gahh! Focus you retard. No! Don't focus! Unfocus! Boobs! Too late, I am now focused...)

"Very well. Tell me if you need me to do something." Saeko responds as she nods, rubbing one of her eyes slightly with her wrist.

With that, We headed to the door. Other than a long, horizontal bar, which was set at about waist height and extended at the full width of each door. There was nothing else to differentiate the doors from the walls next to them...

(Ok, let's see...)

I grab one handle, and push. The handle moving forward and making a light 'click' sound.

"Alright, seems unlocked." I nod and push the door slightly, the heavy door slowly starting to open towards the inside. And...

Groaning. A symphony of groaning, moaning, shuffling. Along with a really REALLY bad smell...

(O hell nope...)

I silently, and as quickly as I can. Close the door, and silence returns to the hallway...

"Please tell me I'm the only one that heard and smelled that..." I speak up as I turn slightly towards Saeko, keeping my face lowered so I don't end up blinding her, my hand still on the handle of the now closed door.

"I am afraid not. Sounded like a horde was in there..." Saeko answers as she folds her arms, frowning slightly.

"Well. At least the insulation here is the real deal. You can't hear crap while the doors are closed. You could throw a damn party in there and nobody would hear a thing." I let my shoulders drop slightly as I turn to look at the door again.

"The problem now is, how do we deal with the current, uhh, occupants..." I add as I groan slightly.

"Should we open the door enough to see inside first? Maybe there are actually fewer corpses inside than it seemed." Saeko asks as she walks up next to me, taking hold of the other handle.

"Yea. And I won't have to say, but dead silence while the doors are open." I respond, Saeko just nods back at me.

And with the count of three, we opened the doors again. This time enough to see inside. And as the hallway became noisy once again, the flashlight flooded part of the room with a dim light...

(Well, I sort of expected this. But uhh, holy freaking kitsune balls. Somebody please call Ilias and tell her that there's an army of zombie girls running amok here...)

The room, was flooded with corpses, mostly female ones. The place was pretty big too, enough to house in eighty? A hundred people? The door we were at right now was at the back of the room, as we had a wall to our right, two doors on said wall, one next to us, one on the other side of the room. The room then continued with a slope to our left, that's where the seats were also at, making it clear that this was a movie projection room.

I tap Saeko on the shoulder, and the moment she turns to me, I motion her to close the door. And, the moment the doors closed.

"Well, we're fucked..." I speak...

"This situation is indeed, quite bad for us. Too many to take head-on, especially in that room." Saeko adds right after.

"Uhh, let's check the other rooms. Maybe we'll think of something on the way..." I shake my head and take a few steps back. Saeko just nods at me...

"Still, I have a question..." I add as we start walking again. Saeko just lets out a questioning 'Hmm?'.

"What sort of sappy drama was playing in there before the outbreak? I didn't see a single 'guy' among the corpses..."

"I, do not know. I never really watched movies..." Saeko responds as she lowers her head slightly.

"Stay focused you idiot, or 'you' will be the next thing they will be watching." Saya adds with a groan.

"Yeaaa, I just hope the next room didn't play the same crap like this one. One horde of crazy fangirls is enough..." I let out a small chuckle as I kept walking.

"Hah, like you would ever have a horde of fangirls." Saya snorts.

"Yea, true. Who needs them anyway. I already have what I need." I respond as I glance slightly towards Saeko.

"S, shut up you idiot..." Saya retorts, her voice sounding a bit, forced.

"Indeed, you should be careful of what you say Naier. I can't tell how I will really react if you keep telling me such things while we're..." Saeko closed in on me, slowly wrapping her hand with mine.

"Alone in here..." She adds with a whisper.

"W, whawha what are you saying! A, and you're not alone in there, you have corpses! Hordes of corpses!" And Saya started shouting,

loudly. Enough to actually make me lean my head away from the microphone in my ear. To no avail, as you know. It's in my ear.

(God this thing is loud, and it's not even on max volume...)

Saeko just giggled as she let go of my arm...

(Uhh, well at least somebody is having fun...)

By the time we were near the second door, we were also past the halfway point of the hallway.

"Ok, I see the second one. And judging from the distance, it must be the last one before the hallway ends." I speak up as I point ahead.

"Let's check it the same way." I add as I glance at Saeko.

And with a nod, we move to the double door, me at the left one, Saeko at the right one...

(God I hope this one ain't a portal to a monster-girl world. Huh, never believed I'd actually say that...)

And as we open the doors slightly. We get greeted by, silence...

(That's a good sign, my nose is also not trying to rip itself off my face...)

Once the doors were open enough to check inside, I looked around the room...

"It's empty, completely empty. Same layout as the last one..." I whisper as I keep looking around while staying by the door.

"Check the room? Maybe you can find some way to deal with the corpses in the other room if they are the same." Saya then speaks up.

"Yea, good idea." I nod slightly, and enter the dark room.

"Uhh. So, what are we looking for?" I asked as I walked up to the center of the walkway that followed on after the door, Saeko following behind me after closing the door.

"Why are you asking me? You're the one who's there." Saya responded with a huff.

"Maybe I 'would' have had an idea. Had you let me come with you." She adds with a smug tone.

(You never miss your chance, do you? And I wonder if 'you' could have handled the pitch blackness here...)

I just shake my head slightly as I keep looking around...

"The room is full of steps and stairs. No way we can fight in here. Best I can think of, is luring them out in small groups. Not that it will be any better, as we'll be in a dark hallway with them, not enough room to move in there either..." I fold my arms as I keep looking around.

"What about these two doors?" Saeko asks as she looks at the door on the wall next to the entrance we used, then the door on the far end of the same wall.

"Hmm, big chance they lead to the projection room. Nothing we can really use up there, as there's no electricity. Nonetheless, let's check it. We do need to make sure everything is clear this place after all." With that, we head to the door on the distant side of the wall.

(Same type of door as the ones we used to enter this room.)

I grab the handle, and push.

"Unlocked. Alright. Let's see..." I open the door with a small nod, and get greeted by a narrow flight of stairs that went up. Which after a few meters, turned towards the right. And then, another door.

"Uhh, why all the doors?..." I tilt my head as I grab the handle of the door, and push it. The door opening with no real problem.

(At least they are unlocked.)

Before going inside I do a quick scan around the room, as it was also, pitch black.

"Emty." I nod and enter it, Saeko following behind me.

Other than a bulky-looking machine right next to the right wall, that I suspect was the projector, as there was a rectangular hole on the wall right in front of the machine. There was also another bulky machine on the opposite wall, this one looking like a computer of some sort, or more precisely, a server. And, one last set of machinery on four layers of metal shelves which were bolted on the wall straight ahead of us. Other than that, two plastic chairs next to the projector, and next to the server, a table with cards, a cigarette tray, cigarette packs, and some cash on it.

"Huh, wait, where are all the reels? Cinemas lied to me. There's no reel here. Only a projector which is a big fat cube that connects to what I think is a server..." I 'frown' as I fold my arms.

"Uhh? Obviously? Cinemas have been digital for decades now. What? Are you still living in the eighties?" Saya scoffs.

"Nineties, the eighties didn't have commercial internet. No wait, make that the two-thousands. The nineties didn't have steam." I respond with a chuckle.

"Steam?" Saeko asks as she tilts her head, arching one eyebrow up.

"Ughh, it's just a gaming platform Saeko. Ignore him, he's being a Nerd." Saya groans.

(Ohh, but you 'do' know what it is eh?)

"Nerd? Please. It's called a gamer. Not all nerds are that awesome." I chuckle as I look through the hole in front of the projector.

"Hum, whatever. Nerd." Saya responds nonchalantly.

"The view from up here is pretty good. I can see the whole room..." I move the projector out of the way, and look back out again, ignoring Saya's little retort. Then pull the rifle and try to aim through the gap...

"Hmm, but I can't aim right under us." I pull the gun back, and look at the magazines on my vest.

"Four, thirty bullets each. Should be enough to clear the whole room if I can somehow manage to get them to stay away from our side..." I tap my helmet a few times as I keep thinking...

"If we had a working phone, or something small which makes constant noise and we can throw..." I fold my arms as I tilt my head.

"You think the earbuds could do?" Saeko asks as she pulls hers out of her ear.

"Well, they are loud, and not even at max output. But they're earbuds, they're not supposed to be 'that' loud..." I shake my head...

And, a few minutes passed in silence. No real ideas coming from anybody...

"Uhh, well, can't think of anything. Let's just check how loud the earbud can get before tossing the plan out the window. We'll go from there..." I sigh as I glance at Saeko. She nods, takes her earbud out, and hands it to me...

(Ok, let's see the earbud is connected to the mic, and I think I saw some volume options on it...)

After looking at the mic for a few seconds, I found two small half-wheel bumps that could turn, one having the volume icon next to it, the other one had nothing.

"Hmm, what does thi..." I start turning the second wheel as I speak.

"AH! Why are you shouting at my ear you idiot!?" Only to get cut off by a flipped-off Saya...

(Huh? I was not shouting. Does this increase the decibels of the mic to make it sound louder?...)

I lower the wheel down again.

"How do I sound now?" I ask.

"Now you sound fine." Saya responds.

I turn the wheel up again, just not as much as before.

"Now?" I ask again.

"Louder." Saya responds.

"Are you using the same microphones as us?" I ask again.

"Uhh, I think so, why?" Saya asks.

"Check the wireless microphone, does it have two 'half wheels'?" I ask yet again. And a few seconds of silence later...

"Yea." Saya answers.

"Hmm, Ok. Turn the one that is not volume to the max" I respond as I pull my own bud out of my ear.

"Like this?" I hear Saya ask from the earbuds that I was now holding in my hand.

"Yea. Now, if I increase the volume..." I turn the 'volume' on my mic to the max...

"Try again." I add as I leave my earbud on the projector.

"Uhh, what am I supposed to say?" Saya asks, her voice still clearly audible from the earbud on the projector...

"Holy crap, I can actually still hear you from this far. This is pretty much a loudspeaker now. I don't know who the hell thought an earbud that could be 'this' loud was a good idea, but it works for us..." I fold my arms as I keep looking at the earbud...

"Well it is loud, but I do not think it is loud enough to actually attract corpses after you have fired a shot." Saeko then speaks up as she comes up next to me.

"Yea. But, we have yet to hear how it'll sound if Saya starts yelling." I respond as I turn to Saeko, lowering the flashlight so it won't shine on her face.

"True." Saeko responds casually.

"What? You can't expect me to just start shouting like an idiot..." Saya grumbles through the earbud...

"You sure?" I ask as I turn to look at the earbud.

"Yes I'm sure." Saya groans back.

(... Hmm, I could just say something among the lines of. 'Saeko I can see your boobs'. High chance to make Saya flip, but uhhh, let's not push our luck...)

"Then, the laptop you found. It should have some default alarms." I respond.

"Uhh, yea. Give me some time then, I need to go get it..." Saya answers, and then turns silent...

(Well, now we wait?...)

"Guess we can take a break now then..." I add as I walk up to one of the chairs, then bring it to the table before sitting down. Saeko taking

the second chair to sit next to me as I gathered the cards around the table into one deck

(Hmm, cards are a really good way to spend your time if you have nothing to do. I'm going to take them along. They don't take much space anyway.)

"Want to play something quick while we wait?" I ask as I turn to Saeko. She stares at the cards for a few seconds before turning to me.

"I only know of one game with cards though. That one where you need to reach twenty-one but not pass it. Some of my father's acquaintances used to play it sometimes after they had gathered for a conference or meeting. " Saeko responds as she tilts her head.

"Blackjack? All the better, it's quick and not too complex. And honestly, I don't know many other card games myself..." I respond as I leave the deck on the desk, between me and Saeko...

"Hmm, alright then." Saeko smiles slightly and she nods.

"You want to, bet anything? To make the game a little more, interesting." She asks right after with the same soft tone, the smile still on her face...

(... Blackjack is a game based mostly on luck right? I didn't just, dug myself a grave did I?...)

Movie night pt3

(... This, must be the biggest mistake of my whole friggin life...)

Right now, I was sitting by the table, a single card in my hand. The projector, along with the rest of the room to my right. Saeko was on the opposite side of the table, with two cards in her hand. She was also wearing my mask, minus the balaclava. Which was on my shoulder, like a hat. Why? Because my luck fucking sucks. Saeko was 2 wins ahead of me, and since cash was useless, it meant that I 'owned' Saeko two 'favors'. Minus one, for the mask she was tooting on her head right now...

(I always said that gambling is a losing game, so why did I agree on betting? Ughh. The only thing I'm holding is an ace, that's one, or eleven. So, I need a ten...)

"Hmm, hey Naier." Saeko then speaks up, lifting her face to look at me with a casual smile.

"Since Saya said that she is almost ready and this is the last game. Want to make this double or nothing?" She asks...

(... Say no, say no. If she asks something like that, it means she's holding a strong hand...)

"Elaborate?" I ask.

"We will make this count for all the points I am currently ahead of you. In other words, two points." She answers with the same casual smile.

"Uhh, that mask on your head counts for one point though." I retort as I point at her head. Saeko raises her eyes to 'look' towards the top of her head, then closes her eyes with a short giggle.

"Hmm, true, I guess it does. So that just means that you can actually turn the tables on me, if you win." She responds with a slight smirk...

(... Or, I will end up owning you three times. Uhh, it boils down to, play it safe and either go for a tie, or two lost points. Or go for broke and go for one winning point, or three lost ones...)

"Fine." I retort as I draw a card...

(Ohh I'm going to regret this. Uhh, ok. Four. So fifteen, or, five.)

"I am ready then." Saeko responds as she leaves her two cards on the table facing down...

(Uhh, if I draw a six, that's twenty-one. Unless she has a twenty-one under the two cards, I win. No idea if the rules are normally like that, but honestly I don't remember them very well. The other is getting seven cards without passing twenty-one. I have an ace, which means I want six, or small numbers to stack up...)

And, I draw another card...

(..Five. Oh come ON. Uhh, ok, ok. I'm still good, with the rules we play, I'm at ten now, four more cards. Or I'm hosed...)

Saeko just tilts her head slightly, that damn smile still on her face...

"Well, all or nothing now." I let out a small sigh, and drew four cards at the same time, Saeko raising an eyebrow with a small 'ohh?'...

"First, let's see your hand." I add as I leave all cards face down. Saeko nods and flips her cards.

"A King and a Jack. That's twenty..." I blink a couple of times as I look at her hand.

(No wonder she had a strong hand. It was that, or she would have something like fours and threes to lose on purpose, something that really does not seem to be her style...)

"So? Your cards are?" Saeko asks as she leans on the desk slightly. The open gap on her shirt opening even wider, exposing her bra even more...

(She doesn't even seem to care about that hole on her shirt anymore...)

I shake my head slightly and start to flip the cards one by one.

"Ace, one." I then flip the next one.

"Four, five." Then the next.

"Five, ten." I stop my hand over the next card.

(And now the unknown ones.)

And flip it...

"... Really now?..." I slap my forehead as I look at the second ace...

"I could have made a twenty-one with this. Ughh, serves me right for making this overly dramatic..." I groan as I shake my head. Saeko just giggles.

"Hmm, I wonder what I should make you do?..." She 'asks' as she glances at me, her smile turning into a small smirk...

"You didn't win yet..." I respond as I flip the next card...

"Ace again, twelve." Saeko arcs an eyebrow as she sees the third ace.

"Five, seventeen..." I then turn to look at the final two cards...

(I need these to be less than, four? R.i.p me...)

"Hmm, want to drop it now? I will also drop one of my points for you too." Saeko then speaks up as she glances at me.

(... That would then be, two points. Aka two 'things' she can ask of me...)

I respond by flipping the next card...

"Hmm? I wonder, why you want to win this so badly? Is there something that you want to make me do?" She glances at the three on the card before turning to look at me, one eyebrow arched, a one-sided smile on her lips.

"Uhh. Didn't think that far..." I shrug slightly as I grab the last card.

"Hmm? Is that so?" She 'asks' as she tilts her head, smile still on her face.

Without responding, I flip the last card...

"..." And stare at the card...

"Can I flip the table now please?..." I 'ask'...

"If you want. You are still going to owe me a total of three points though~" Saeko chimes as she lifts the queen card and waves it slightly at me...

"Gambling, sucks..." I fold my arms as I glance towards the projector with a chuckle.

"Humm? I for one found our game to be rather fun." Saeko responds as she leans slightly on the table, the hole her shirt becoming even more, pronounced...

"I'd be weird if you didn't, especially after winning." I respond with a slight shrug as I turn to look at her.

"So, uhh. I guess I'm not going to be getting my mask back?..." I ask as I lean on my chair. Saeko puts one finger over her mouth, tapping it slowly as she turns her sight towards the ceiling. 'Thinking' of an answer...

"I guess I could return it to you..." She responds as she turns her sight back to me with a small smile.

"But, you would have to give me back something of, equal value." She adds with the same smile.

(Figures. Uhh...)

I scratch my forehead slightly as I keep thinking, the room turning silent while Saeko just keeps staring at me, smile still on her lips...

And while the room was dead silent.

"BZZZZZZEEEEEEEEEE!" An obnoxiously loud sound started coming off from the earbuds...

I reflexively jerk my head back and turn to look towards the earbuds...

"Ops, sorry~ Was that too loud?" I hear Saya speak up right after, though she sounded anything but sorry, more likely smugly pleased...

(... Goddammit Saya...)

"Loud enough to work for what we need it for." I respond as I tap my ear...

"Aaaand I think I just went deaf from one side..." I add as I cover my right ear.

"Ha-ha. Now stop wasting time and get ready." Saya groans.

(Jeez, cold chundere is cold.)

I get up from the chair, picking up the helmet off the table, and walk up to the earbuds on the projector.

"So, should we first go to the other cinema room. Or check the rest of the building?" I ask as I pick the earbuds.

"... Wait. You have yet to check the whole building?" Saya asks with a slightly annoyed tone.

"Uhh, yea? We still have to check two hallways. The one opposite of us, and the one that connects them at the end. What, are you going to tell me I am not allowed to take a break until I clear out everything?" I ask back with a slight chuckle.

"Uhh, that's not what I said you idiot. I just thought that the room with the horde was all that was left." Saya responds with a slight huff...

"Though by taking that break, I ended up losing spectacularly at a card game..." I add as I turn towards Saeko, who was still with my mask on her head.

"Ha, that's what you get for slacking off." Saya retorts right after, her voice sounding rather smug for some reason.

(Why are 'you' sounding so self-satisfied? You're not the one who won...)

"Yes, and now I owe Saeko three favors." I respond.

"What? W, what do you, owe her?..." She asks with a slightly lower tone.

"I am still thinking about that." Saeko then speaks up.

"Well you're not allowed to ask for anything that will be detrimental to me. I did not take part in your stupid game, so I should not have to pay for it." Saya responds with a slightly irritated tone.

"Of course." Saeko replies with a small giggle.

"Uhh, well if we're set. Let's go." I speak up as I pick up the two earbuds. Putting the one with 'normal' volume in my ear.

"Since we'll be using one earbud from now on, Saeko won't be able to hear you." I then mute the loud earbud and pocket it.

(Better safe than sorry.)

"So she can't hear me now?" Saya asks right after.

"No. But that doesn't mean you get to whine while she can't hear you." I answer flatly.

"W, what?! I, I had no intention of doing such a thing! It's not like I'm stuck here by myself while you two are playing games. And that you now 'owe' Saeko favors..." Saya 'not' whines. I just chuckle slightly and shake my head.

"Alright. Once we are out. Back to being silent. Especially the moment we get near the other cinema room..." I turn to Saeko as I speak, who just nods at me.

"I want to see how we'll deal with that awesome smell in there. The place should have vents and air conditioners. But without electricity, good luck manually turning the fans..." I add as I make sure that I have everything on me.

"Ah, about that. Apparently the team sent to the dam is almost finished. From what I heard being tossed around in the tower. There's a chance they will try to restart it before the other teams are actually finished. These teams being us, the hospital, and gas station one." Saya answers.

"I see. That could matter, if electricity could actually make it to this place. Emp aside, the neighboring area is a total wreck, electrical pylons included." I shrug as I start heading towards the door.

"Yes, true. But If that was the case, then the airport would not get electricity either, as it's after the neighborhood you are in at the moment. So there's a good chance that there are other connections to the dam, ones that are still standing. Don't think the army and my

Papa would have gone through all this trouble without looking that up first." Saya responds.

"Hm, I just hope that the still-standing pylons ain't completely fried then..." I reply as I open the door.

"No idea, but from what I heard. If they are not working, then they will draw new power lines over the fried ones." Saya answers.

"Huh, with all the corpses running around? They'd have to take back a rather big part of the city to do that safely." I scoff as I start going down the stairs.

"And why you think you're there right now you idiot? They 'are' trying to take back parts of the city. With the ones around the airport being first." Saya retorts.

"So that means, I'll have to do this again?" I groan as I exit the staircase, ending up in the cinema room.

"That's..." Saya stops talking, her voice sounding, uncertain...

"Anyway..." I turn to Saeko as I start talking.

"We'll use the same hallway. We can check the rest of the building after we are done." I pointed at the entrance we used to come into the room the first time around.

"Very well. But, I have to ask. You have a plan?" Saeko asks as she nods.

"Simply put? We open the door. Throw the loud earbud. Saya makes a crap ton of noise. Using the opening, we then enter the door next to us, which leads to the projection room. Clear whatever might be there, and then snipe the corpses from there." I fold my arms as I start explaining.

"Hmm, in other words. I won't really have to do anything?" Saeko asks as she tilts her head.

"Well. Ye...." My sight falls on the handgun attached to her hip as I begin to speak.

"No. Actually, you'll be taking shooting lessons. On 'live' targets." I continue as I point at her handgun. Saeko glances at her handgun, before folding her arms.

"Are you sure? You never really showed me how to use it..." She asks again as she lifts an eyebrow.

"No time like the present then. Unless the corpses figure out how to get up to us by opening doors that are located in a different direction from where the sound will be coming from. We won't have any problems..." I nod slightly as I keep looking at Saeko.

"And actually, we better do start with your gun." I add, causing Saeko to frown questionably.

"The Scar-H is a high-caliber weapon. Shooting it in a closed space, in total darkness. That mask on your head might be able to protect your eyes a bit. But the sound? I have the balaclava, and the helmet, so I have 'some' protection. But you'd be surprised how debilitating it can be to shoot a gun under these circumstances. And, uhh. Speaking of masks..." I tap the side of my forehead as I keep looking at Saeko.

"Found something to trade it for?" Saeko asks as she smirks slightly.

(She's still going with that?...)

"Me not getting blinded after every shot?" I 'ask' as I tilt my head. Saeko just giggles slightly, then picks the mask off her head.

"I will believe you that you need it in order to teach me how to use my gun then." She adds with a small giggle, extending it towards me with her hand. I just take it without responding.

(That, was easier than expected. Now whatever film the visor has, does make everything slightly darker. Not to the point of walking blind though.)

After wearing everything back, I readjust the flashlight and ready the shield.

"Alright, no more talking. Let's go." I motion with my head as I turn to walk towards the exit.

"Humm. Right when I was starting to get used to your face. Oh well. I still do have three wishes." Saeko giggles from behind me...

(... Suddenly, I feel unsafe...)

With that, I head back on the hallway, and towards the room with the horde. Being an already traveled path, and having no corpses to slow us down, we got there pretty fast. And once we reached the door, I turned to Saeko.

"I just hope the earbud won't break after I throw it." I turn the loud earbud on as I whisper...

"Then be careful." And Saya speaks up, right as I open the earbud. In other words, the whole hallway must have heard her...

"Oh holy shit!" I quickly cover the earbud and reflexively look around.

"Saya, the loud one is open. Please don't speak up out of nowhere..." I whisper.

"O, ohh sorry I didn't know and..."

"Saya. You're speaking again..." I cut the pinkette off. And this time, get silence in return...

(I know the soundproofing means the corpses probably heard nothing. Probably...)

I let out a small sigh and grabbed the door handle...

"Here goes nothing. Saya, once I tell you, go full volume..." I whisper, and open the door slightly, half expecting to have a corpse staring right back at me through the crack, which thankfully, didn't happen.

(Sound insulation for the win huh?)

Ignoring the 'awesome' smell, I open the door completely.

(Can somebody tell me why I keep thinking about why corpses smell while alive humans don't? Fucking timing you have for these thoughts brain.)

I shake my head slightly and look at the door next to us.

(Slightly open. Not a good sign. But we have no corpses near us. So let's throw the earbud towards the deeper part of the room. Thankfully everything is covered with a mat. So as long as nothing steps on it, we should be fine...)

While slightly crouching down, I walk a few steps into the room, and open the door that led to the projection room completely.

(First part of the stairs is clear. Ok. let's do this.)

I motion Saeko to get on the stairs. She nods and enters the room, before heading past me and up a few steps up on the stairs. I then turn towards the room, and with a quick motion, toss the loud earbud towards the central row of chairs. Then enter the staircase as well, and close the door behind me.

"Saya, go loud." I whisper as I turn to Saeko.

"The door was slightly open. Chance is we might have not so friendly friends waiting for us up there." Just as I finish speaking, classical music starts playing in the room behind me...

"There. How's that?" Saya asks.

(Classical eh?)

"Louder than the corpses from what I can hear. It'll do just fine. Ok, turn it down for now. Let's make sure the projector room is clear. Then set up 'shop'." I motion Saeko to move towards the top of the staircase as I grab my handgun.

(We're about to turn this into a shooting gallery. Might as well start from now if it comes down to it.)

The staircase was just like the one before, turning to the left halfway up. Once I climbed said staircase, I found the top door also slightly ajar. I stopped by the door, and slightly pushed it. Making it to silently open...

(... Huh...)

The room, was a mess. The projector was toppled on the ground. And the server was left haphazardly in the middle, as if somebody pushed it and left in a hurry. But more importantly.

"Not a single corpse. Dead or otherwise. Did the employees manage to flee? I mean, the exit 'is' essentially right next to this room..." I whisper as I tilt my head slightly.

(Whatever. Let's do a quick check.)

Handgun ready, I walk inside the room and scan my surroundings...

(... Yep. Totally empty.)

"Ok. Looks like we are in the clear." I lower the handgun and turn to look towards the entrance we just used.

"Close that door. I'll go make sure that the other set of stairs have both doors closed with no corpses wandering about." I add as I turn

to Saeko, lowering the flashlight on my helmet. She just nods before turning to walk towards the door we just used.

After making my way to the door on the other side of the room, I open it, and check the stairs.

(Hmm, this door was closed.)

I then start going down the stairs, and the moment I take the mid staircase turn, I stop dead in my tracks.

A single corpse, dressed in what seemed to be a uniform, was on the bottom of the stairs, facing the door that led to the movie room.

(The door behind it might not be closed, shooting it can end badly if it ends up opening the door with its body while I'm this far. As I will probably have to move the body away before closing it. Saya did make noise, so most corpses should be at the far end of the room. But I don't want to risk it.)

I silently holster the handgun. Before slowly drawing the sword. I then ready the shield, and start moving down the stairs...

Probably because of all the moans that echoed around, along with the muffling sound of the mat under my boots, I managed to reach it without getting its attention. I then lifted the sword next to my face with the blade pointing towards the corpse, stabilizing said blade by bringing my free hand under the blade's flat side.

And with a swift motion, stab forward, the blade punching through the corpse's skull. And, a sudden increase in weight as the corpse started to turn limb.

"Let's see if the door is open now." As I push the blade back, I place my boot against its chest, and push. The door staying tightly shut all the while.

"Hmm, think we're good. The other door opens towards the outside, and even if this one opens towards the inside for some reason, the body will block it." I nod and turn to head back up as I sheath the blade.

Upon making it back, I found Saeko by the door I asked her to close, her hand still on the handle...

"Is something wrong?" I ask. Causing Saeko to turn towards me.

"You have the only flashlight. I could not see a thing after you left. So I waited." She responds as she lets go of the handle and starts walking up towards me, stopping next to the gap in the hole that the projector used to, project from.

"Oh, right. Uhh, sorry. I sort of totally forgot that." I tap my helmet as I apologize.

"It is alright. Though, you should know not to leave a girl alone in the dark Naier." Saeko responds in a rather playful manner.

"Right..." I just keep looking at her for a few seconds...

"There's a Re-dead corpse on this staircase. We won't be using it to leave." Before continuing and closing the door behind me. Saeko just giggles back at me.

"Very well. So, I am ready for your lesson. Master." She then responds with a somewhat, sly smile. I just stood by the door for a couple of seconds, staring at her, again...

"Pervert..." Saya whispers with annoyed whine.

"This sounded wrong. In so many ways..." I clear my throat as I start walking towards her.

"It did? You are going to teach me something. That essentially makes me your pupil. And you, my master." She adds as she tilts her head, slightly lifting both eyebrows as she does so.

"You're, overthinking this." I respond as I stop next to her, turning to look through the gap.

"... Pervert..." Saya whines once again...

(What in this whole thing makes me a damn pervert you pink tornado?)

Deciding not to feed the whining troll, I take my Scar-H off me, along with my handgun and shield. Then leave them on the toppled projector next to me.

"Ok. Let's see. Corpses seem to be gathered around the far part of the room, so the trick worked, for now at least." I nod and turn to Saeko.

"Can I see the handgun for a bit?" I ask as I point at her thigh. Saeko nods, and hands me the handgun...

"... Uhh. Saeko? You do know this handgun has a flashlight attachment, right?..." I ask as I turn the flashlight on the handgun on...

"Oh. I, never checked. Sorry, I did not know." She responds as she leans over to look at the gun in my hand. I throw a short glance at her as I chuckle, before looking back at the gun.

(A rare Saeko blooper eh?)

"It works too. Oh well, now we know..." I shrug slightly as I pull the magazine out, then slam it back in.

"Fifteen rounds, and you have two more mags right?" I ask as I give her the gun back.

"Yes." She responds as she turns to show me her other thigh...

(... Is she being this provoking on purpose?...)

"Alright, leave them on the projector, next to my stuff. And come on my side, so you have an easy reach for them." I point at the projector to my right, then take a step back. Saeko nods and walks up to where I was, then leaves the two magazines on the projector.

"... I never got to shoot anything when you showed me my gun..."
Saya whines once again.

"Then you should listen in too Saya." I respond.

"Hum. As if. If you'll show Saeko how to shoot by giving her a personal lesson. Then you'll have to show me the same way too."
Saya retorts, I could honestly see her pout through the earbud...

(Don't chuckle if you don't want to have a tornado after you later...)

"As you wish..." I answer casually as I walk up next to Saeko.

"Umm, so. What do I do first? Mas..."

"Have the gun's muzzle. The front, long part. Pointing away from anybody you don't want dead." I cut her off as I point at the corpses through the gap in the wall. Saeko just giggles before lifting the gun with one arm, said arm slightly bent...

"Keep your finger off the trigger." I add as I get closer to her, tapping her trigger finger. She nods and pulls her finger away.

"Now, turn off the safety. It's this little cylindrical switch over your thumb." I then point at the safety. Saeko nods once again, and turns the safety off.

"Ok, now, stretch your arm, grab the gun with both hands. Last thing you need is having a loaded gun slip from your hand after a shot." I bring my hand under her elbow and push it up slightly. Saeko sketches her arm before bringing her second hand on the handle.

"Now turn your upper body so the gun is not sideways to you, and spread your legs." Just I say that. I hear a "PPPPFFTT" coming off

from the earbud.

"Wha?!" Saya shouts in my ear. Loud enough to actually hear it from the earbud that was down in the horde room...

"What wha?" I ask as I put my hands on Saeko's shoulders, and slightly adjust my posture.

"What do you mean 'spread your legs' you pervert?!" Saya shouts, her voice audible from the room below...

(... Really now?...)

Saeko then turns to look at me. A, slight smirk on her face...

"Do you want me to spread my legs more?" She adds with the smirk still on her face. Causing Saya to respond with some, incomprehensible sounds...

(You're just doing this on purpose now.)

"Saeko. Please don't tease our already overcharged comms operative." I respond as I fold my arms.

"I know that mic you have still works." I add as I lean slightly towards her. She just giggled in response.

"I apologize, I could not help myself." She answers.

"You're both stupid idiots!" Saya shouts once again...

"And no. Do not 'spread' your legs more. Just enough so you're able to balance yourself, also, have one foot slightly further back." I let out a sigh as I kept speaking.

After Saeko did all I asked, I brought my finger over the gun's barrel.

"This gun has bioluminescent dots, so this should be easier to pull off. See the two small green dots on the back of the gun? Try to align

them with the single green dot on the front, while keeping your wrist straight. One eye closed." I ran my finger along the gun's barrel before pulling it back...

After a few seconds, Saeko nods.

"Now, find a target, pick the closest head you can make out, and aim at it. Actually, since you're not used at using a gun, aim at the neck for now. As the recoil can make you miss." I turn to look outside as I speak...

"And now?..." Saeko asks after a few seconds.

"Finger on the trigger." I respond as I turn to her. And as she puts her finger on the trigger.

"Uhh, can't really tell if you have your finger in the correct position right now because of the glove. Your finger, other than the knuckle, has two more joints. To make it simple, the joints of the trigger finger must not touch the trigger itself." I lean slightly towards the gun's trigger as I point at it. Saeko nods, and readjusts her finger.

"Now?" She asks again.

(Let's see, posture, safety, handling, aiming.)

"Squeeze the trigger." I respond as I turn to look towards the horde. And second later, a single, rather loud gunshot. Followed by a single corpse in the group downstairs jerking its upper body as if somebody just punched it in the shoulder. Turning to Saeko, I see her rubbing the eye she had open.

"Uhh, that was louder, and brighter than I expected. Which one did I hit?..." Saeko asks as she slightly lowers the gun, turning to look at me while rubbing one of her eyes.

"The one with the curly long hair, red shirt. Missing half an arm. And, here." I take off my mask and give it to her as I keep speaking. Then

turn to look outside, the corpses now slowly turning to march towards us.

"Uhh, that was two corpses further away from the one I was aiming..." Saeko frowns slightly as she looks outside, then wears my mask.

"Hmm? So this is how you see the world? Interesting." She then adds as turns to look around her.

I chuckled through my nose before turning to look at her.

"We could take some more shots. But I want to check how the earbud works after a gunshot. Saya can you put something on?" I ask.

"Yea, yea..." Saya responds with a slightly annoyed tone. And classical music starts playing once more. Causing the corpses to stop, and turn around.

"Alright. Seems to work fine. So, rinse and repeat. Also, since we do not have infinite ammo, aim at spots where corpses are grouped together. That way you might still take one of them down even if you miss." I glance at Saeko as I lean on the gap's edge with one hand, then turn to look back out. Saeko nods, and aims again.

And after a few seconds, she pulls the trigger again. This time a corpse from a tightly packed group actually disappearing from sight. This time Saeko did not speak, she just kept aiming. Before firing again. And again...

(Hmm, she seems to be getting the hang of this pretty quick. I guess being diligent from all her sword training helps...)

And with that, Saeko kept firing. Until...

"Umm, Naier? The gun looks weird now." She speaks up as she keeps staring at the gun's slide, which was now stuck back, signaling

that the magazine was empty.

"You run out of bullets. Push the small extruding circle next to your thumb while having one hand under the gun. Oh and Saya. We need some noise." I respond as I point at the magazine ejector. Saeko nods and does as I asked. While yet again, some classical music started to play...

"Now lower your hand, the magazine should come out, leave it next to the full ones, and replace it." I add as I point at the toppled projector. And, after Saeko had placed a new magazine in the gun.

"Now press the long-looking switch next to your thumb." I point at the slide catch as I speak. Saeko presses the switch, and the slide rushes forward. The sudden recoil causing Saeko to slightly jerk her shoulders up in surprise.

"Now you're good to go." I add as I turn to look back out...

(Bad aim or not, out of the fifteen rounds, at least six corpses have permanently hit the ground. From the ones I can see at least.)

"This feels so, weird..." She adds as she starts aiming again.

"Hmm?" I turn to glance at her before looking back out.

"I have spent so much time training with a sword. Yet, with barely any training. I have already 'killed' something, with barely any effort. Makes my sword training feel really, redundant. Even somebody that is clearly weaker than me would be able to far exceed me. Had they had some basic gun training." Saeko keeps aiming the gun as she speaks.

"There's a reason guns took over modern warfare. You don't need to spend years of mental and physical training to pull the trigger." I respond as I turn to her.

"But for an everyday person who is not living in the U.S.? Let's just say that a gun without ammo is as good as a wet fart." I add with a chuckle. Causing Saeko to let out a small chuckle, the gun in her hand slightly wavering.

"That is some way to describe it." She responds as she glances at me before aiming the gun again.

"But it's true. We just got very lucky with ammo. Both with the army, and with Saya's dad letting us stock up." I answer.

"Hmm. I guess you are right. Everything has a drawback after all." She responds as she takes a shot.

"If we are to speak about drawbacks. The noise is also one big problem." I add.

"Indeed, firing this is rather loud." She nods.

"And the bigger guns are insanely louder." I glance at the Scar-H as I speak.

"Hmm. Are you going to show me how to use the big one too?" She asks as she starts aiming again.

"We'll see. Finish your ammo on this one first." I respond.

"You won't really have much of a choice I think. The bullets for this gun are clearly not enough to kill them all." She adds as she takes another shot.

"True and the other handgun that I got only got two mags of nine bullets. Even if you land every shot, it won't be enough." I look back out as Saeko takes another shoot...

We then stayed silent for some time, while Saeko kept shooting...

(Hmm. She must have taken down what, ten, twelve? And if this place could hold let's say, a hundred people. I have four twenty-

round mags for the scar-H and two nine-round mags for the P220. Will it be enough if Saeko uses them? The scar does have better penetrative power, and as the room tilts downwards it should be possible to hit more than one head if they are all clustered together...)

"Hmm. I have an idea." Saeko then speaks up as she lowers the gun slightly.

"I will 'use' one of the three favors you owe me." She adds as she turns to me, her expression not visible from under the mask...

(... should I be scared?)

"You will let me use all the guns we have." She continues as she glances at the guns on the projector.

"And depending on how well I do. You will reward me." She adds as she turns to me.

"What?! T, this isn't a game for you to ask of such things Saeko." Saya whines my ear...

"She can't hear you Saya..." I respond as I reflexively turn towards her voice. Obviously finding nothing but wall next to me.

"But uhh, more importantly. I don't even know if the ammo we got is enough to clear them all without taking two or three down with each shot." I continue as I glance out.

"Plus, we still have parts we have yet to check. I'd rather not look around with an empty gun. Oh and Saya. Music please." I add.

"Hmm, that is true. A change then. You will be the one shooting. If you manage to clear them all. You win." She answers as she leaves the handgun, and mask on the projector, before turning to me.

"But if you don't. Hmm, that would mean that I will have to take over. So, if I clear them after you have failed to do so. I will be my win. In

other words, a reward." She adds as she makes a slight grin...

(... Since when did she become so competitive? Uhh whatever. The whole thing aside, going down there to clear the horde with melee? That's friggin insane...)

"Fine." I respond flatly.

(And intriguing as that sounds. Sadly for you, no matter how much you grin at me, I don't intend to lose on purpose...)

"If you lose again, I'm going to bury you alive." Saya then adds through the earbud.

"Noted. No pressure." I answer with a slight chuckle.

"I can use all the guns, right?" I ask as I point at the projector. Saeko nods, and moves back, letting me take her place.

(Hmm, let's start by taking as many as possible with the least amount of bullets as possible. So, let's start with the scar-H.)

"You might wanna cover your ears." I say as I pick up and wear my mask. Then take the scar-H, and lean on the opening as I flip the safety off.

"Saya. I'd like to request the quickest, loudest song you can find." I add as I look through the scope, then start fiddling with the flashlight on my helmet to get a better view of my targets.

"Hmm, don't blame me for this." Saya scoffs.

And as I keep aiming. A certain, helicopter raid song, aka ride of the valkyries, starts playing...

"... Why am I hearing boss music?" I chuckle as I line up a shot, and fire. Causing a line of three corpses to fall flat down.

The music momentarily getting muffled by the loud echo caused by the scar-H.

"Oh, that, is loud." I hear Saeko say while sitting next to me. I just stayed quiet as I kept aiming. And then fired another shot, and another. Each shot sending groups of corpses to the ground.

Without wasting time, once the group I was aiming at started to thin, I aimed towards a new one before I started firing again. And more corpses started getting face planted to the ground, or well, head planted, as some of them probably did not even have a 'face' anymore.

"Ahh, my ears are ringing..." Saeko whispered? I could not really say, all I can say is, is that I was actually trying to hold myself back from chuckling as I kept blasting off heads.

I think Saya also tried to say something, but along with the loud music and the echoing gunshots, I could not hear her either...

And shot after shot, corpses started to thin, where some of them on the ground still 'alive'? No idea, I was too focused on the standing ones.

Until with a 'click', the gun stopped firing, signaling an empty mag. Without looking away from the scope I take the mag off. Letting it drop next to me before tapping around the projector next to me until I found the next mag. Shoving the mag in the gun, I start to almost rhythmically fire again.

Changing group after group of targets, until that I was actually starting to run out of grouped up targets. So, I started to take down any corpse I could just see standing.

And one by one, the remaining corpses also started to hit the ground, to the point that by the time the second mag was out, I was actually shooting corpses that were already on the ground...

As I mechanically started to change to the third mag, I scanned the room, once, twice...

"Uhh, where did all the corpses go?" I ask as I blink a couple of times, lifting my head off the scope...

Turning my head to Saeko, I find her sitting on a chair, next to me. Plugging both her ears shut with her hands...

Saeko, upon seeing that I turned to her, stopped covering her ears.

"Welcome back. Done already?" She 'asks' with a joking giggle.

"I, would normally say that you were not being fair, not telling me you could clear the whole horde just like that. " She speaks up as she glances through the gap, the song still playing...

"But, getting the chance to look at you while you were this focused. I will take it as a fair trade-off." She adds with a small smile.

"So you won? Or you're going to ignore me again." Saya asks with a slightly annoyed tone.

"Uhh, when did you ask that for me to ignore you? I honestly did not hear a thing." I ask as I flip the safety on the scar.

"And, well. Do corpses that are hidden under other corpses count? I can't see any standing ones..." I add as I glance outside.

"It's impossible to spot them from here. And walking over to that floor of bodies to check, is just ridiculous." I continue.

"Hmm, true. It is your win then. But as you said, how will we check for any live ones?" Saeko asks right after.

"What if you don't? I can tell Papa that we cleared a room full of them, but couldn't confirm that they are all dead because they are all huddled together and we lacked the equipment to safely check. So

he can send people equipped correctly to deal with that." Saya then speaks up.

"Ehh, not a bad idea, let's do that. That also means we'll have to leave the earbud behind though." I nod slightly as I take the Baretta, flip the safety, and hand it back to Saeko.

"From what you just said, I take it we will start looking at the rest of the building now?" Saeko asks again.

"Yea, we still got two hallways to check." I nod again as I start picking my own stuff.

"Hmm, so I lost in the end. Now I have only two favors left to ask of you. I think I will have to think a bit more, carefully from now on." Saeko giggles as I finish placing my stuff back to their corresponding place...

(I'm never playing frigging cards again. Not with bets at least...)

Movie night pt4

"This flashlight is rather strenuous to hold..." Saeko mumbles as passes the small handgun flashlight from one hand to the other.

"Well it 'was' made to be attached to a gun so..." I glanced at the purple-haired samurai as we kept walking down the hallway.

"I know. But I still feel a bit uncomfortable holding a gun. I am a bit nervous that I might pull the trigger by accident. So I do not want to hold it just for the flashlight." Saeko responds.

(With the safety on and the finger off the trigger? Well, you do you I guess.)

"Also, as you can guess, I am more used to using a blade. Holding a gun would mean I would first have to put it away, before I can draw my sword. Or I can drop the gun to the floor?" She then asks as she turns to look at me.

"Yaaa. Don't do that. While your handgun isn't exactly old in terms of model, and new handguns have some safety measures in case you drop them from waist height, it's still a bet you'd rather not take." I shrug slightly as I keep walking, the hallway slowly becoming brighter as we were closing in to its end.

Since we, or more correctly I. Fired the ever-living crap out of that horde. We decided to check the front of the cinema, just in case the noise had caused more corpses to gather outside...

"If the front is already overrun, what is your plan?" Saeko asks as she covers her eyes slightly because of the increasing brightness.

"For starters? Go to the empty cinema room, the non-smelly one. We can think of what to do there without worrying about being noisy. There's no way this place has only one entrance. And we still need

to check the final hallway." I respond as we close into the end of the hallway.

The moment we walked into the main room, I looked at the door. Which was still closed. The problem was that there seemed to be an increase in corpses visible through the door's central broken glass frame, numerous hands waving about through the broken part of the door...

"Well, the doors are still closed..." I blink a couple of times as I look at the ricketing barricade.

"Should we reinforce it?" Saeko whispers.

"Yea. Grab some of the ropes that connect the short pylons in front of the foodstuff counter. I'll see if I can bring some stuff to add to the barricade from the lounge area." I nod and start heading towards the lounge area.

(Hmm, we could use a table to block the broken glass part of the door. And more couches are obviously good.)

I nod to myself and start pushing another couch towards the barricade.

"Is the door going to hold?" Saya asks through the earbud.

"The door looks rather sturdy, and the barricade did not get any worse for wear. If it breaks, then ask your father to send in people. For now, we're good." I respond as I finish pushing the couch. The corpses getting a bit more, agitated from the sound of the grinding couch.

"What do I do with the rope?" Saeko then asks as she runs up to me.

"Uhh, we can tie the door handles a second time, and pass a second pylon through the handles. Though, all these hands might be a problem... Huh... wait." I run back to the lounge, and grab a table.

While walking back over to the barricade with it, I look towards the ceiling.

"Hmm, nothing to tie it to. But, I should be able to use it to manually to block the hands while you work on the door." I stop next to Saeko as I keep speaking, then turn to face the door.

"Let's see..." I then hold the table like a lance, with the flat, wooden side, aiming towards the door. And then start moving forward, until a couple of hands actually grabbed the edges of the table. But that's all they actually did, as they did not try to pull, or push. Which, ended with a couple of cracked fingers, seeing as I essentially plugged the hole with the table...

I then turn to Saeko, and nod. She nods back and gets over the second couch, then starts tying the rope around the handles, before passing a second pilon through them.

... Let's, not mention that her behind, was now at head high to me...

Once she was done, she got off the couch, tapped my shoulder and took a few steps back. I then let the table drop, digging it between the first couch and the door.

(Ok, let's go, we made enough noise here...)

I nod slightly as I back off, then point towards the hallway we used. Saeko nods back and starts moving towards it, with me following behind her.

And so, we entered the dark hallway once again. Keeping a steady pace as we moved past the door with the used-to-be horde.

"I do not see any doors to our right. You think there is going to be anything else here?" Saeko asks as she slows down to move a bit closer to me.

"I find it hard to believe that this place has no other rooms. If I had to take a guess. The hallway that connects these two hallways might have a door. Don't buildings need to have emergency exits or something?" I ask.

"Yes. Or at least I'm pretty sure that having only one exit could get the owner fined, if the location is a workplace that is. What if there's only one exit and there's an emergency, and some workers are on the other side of the building that does not have an exit?" Saya then speaks up.

"Well, let's see if we're going to sue whoever owned this place then..." I respond with a chuckle.

"Though, one exit also means only one entry point for the corpses..." I add as I keep walking.

"We are going to find out soon enough. I can see the end of this hallway." Saeko then speaks up as she keeps looking straight at the hallway ahead of us.

(I really wish this place had some friggin working lights. No matter how long I spend in these hallways, I still get creeped out. No way I'm actually saying that though. Got to keep 'some' of my dignity...)

"By the way, did you watch any movies before the outbreak?" Saeko then speaks up.

"Uhh, well I..."

"Hey! You're on a mission! Act like it!" Saya then gloriously cuts me off.

I turn to glance at Saeko, who was also looking at me with a slight smile. And then I shrug slightly.

With that, we kept going, until we reached the end of the hallway.

Taking the turn, we found the next, and final hallway to be empty. And rather short too, as it was the length of a single cinema room.

"Hey Naier, look." Saeko almost instantly points her flashlight towards the center of the hallway, on the wall to our right. Where a single, sideways positioned pole was sticking out, the same type the doors that led into the cinema rooms had.

"Guess we're not done yet after all. We got one more door, middle of the hallway that connects the other two hallways." I speak up as we start to move again.

"So it just circles around the second cinema room?" Saya asks.

"Yep." I respond flatly.

Reaching the door, we find it to indeed be the same type of door the other rooms used yet again. And with a slight push, the door clicks, and starts to open...

The first thing I saw was, light. Well, what I really saw was an ugly cement hallway, but said hallway was lit up. Not because it had working lights. But because straight ahead of us, at the end of that hallway, was an open door that seemed to lead outside.

(A second exit? Back exit? Open one too. Fleeing staff left it? Or people that entered this place post-outbreak? Would be really weird if it's the latter though, seeing as the door is left wide open.)

"Umm, Naier? I do not see anything, hostile." Saeko then speaks up. And, I realize that I was actually still brandishing the shield, towards nothing...

"Uhh, light blinded me..." I respond with an obviously flat lie as I let out a dry cough. Saeko just giggles in response.

(Well, that was lame...)

"So? What's there?" Saya asks.

"Hallway, I see one big double door on the wall to our left, a staircase a few meters after that door, and yet another door after that staircase. The right wall has nothing. The end of the hallway leads to a back exit. The back exit is open. The place looks empty though. And, something tells me it was an employee section only." I speak up as I slowly enter the cement hallway, the sound of my footsteps becoming more audible now that there was no mat on the floor.

"Huh? Why?" Saya asks back.

"It's really ugly to look at, the cement walls are cracked, and they look, rough." I respond as I run my hand on the wall, causing small parts of the coating that covered the wall to peel off.

Upon getting closer to the double doors, we find that they were of the sliding type, and they were slightly open, creating a small gap.

(Room behind these doors is pitch black. And the flashlight can't shine through well enough.)

"Saeko keep an eye on the double door. I'm going to close the back exit." I whisper as I tap her shoulder. She nods and draws her blade, then turns to stare at the door...

(Well, she took that a bit 'too' literally...)

I then move towards the door. Stopping to check the staircase that was between the exit and the room Saeko was now guarding.

(Stairs are empty.)

Then to the door next to the staircase...

(An elevator? Doors are closed.)

And finally, to the exit. The door that led outside, as mentioned, was open. Towards the outside.

(I can't see any shadows on the ground next to the exit...)

Getting next to the door, I check the right side before walking slightly out, the door still behind me.

(I see corpses in the alleyway alright. But they don't seem to be moving. Was the sound insulation 'that' good?)

I then glance behind the door, to see even more corpses. And then, I closed the door.

"We have corpses on the alleyway behind the cinema." I speak up as I start walking in the now dark hallway.

"Want to take care of them?" Saeko then asks as she glances at me.

"No, we'll just clear the building. Don't think they'll 'pay' us extra if we clear the outside. Plus the back door looks sturdy, don't think corpses will be able to knock it down even if they tried." I respond as I shake my head. Saeko nods at me.

"Getting paid huh." Saya snorts with a slightly sarcastic tone.

Once I was next to Saeko, I looked back towards the gap between the two sliding doors.

"Well, let's get this over with." I take a deep breath as I grab one of the doors, and open it. Bringing the shield to the front the moment the opening allowed me to do so. Throwing a quick glance to make sure nothing was behind the doors, or near them, I then took a few steps inside, Saeko following next to me.

(Another storage. This one is rather sizable too. Though every shelf here is with its back to a wall, essentially leaving the center of the room empty...)

"Storage, empty. Weird set up though, too much unused space.." I speak up as I keep looking around.

"Another storage? What does this one have?" Saya asks.

"No idea. Let's check some shelves." I respond as I turn to Saeko, she nods and turns to walk towards a shelf to our left.

With that, I also moved to the nearest set of shelves to my right, which essentially was behind me and next to the doors.

The shelves themselves had several cardboard boxes lined up. Some small, some big.

(Hmm, wonder if I can find any tank cardboard boxes here. We have two people here, so one can drive, the other can shoot. I mean, they 'are' Big boss approved so...)

I shake my head slightly as I let out a chuckle, and open the first box in front of me.

"Uhh, fuses, way, too many fuses." I say as I pick one of the said fuses from the box.

"This box over here has electronic parts too, I do not know what they are used for though..." Saeko then responds from the other side of the room.

(Next box.)

"... light bulbs." I tilt my head as I rummage around the second box.

"And this box here has parts which look like to be from the machines we saw in the projector rooms." Saeko then speaks up again.

"Hmm, so this is a storage with spare electronics for the cinema?" I ask as I back off.

"That could be helpful. I am pretty sure they will need stuff like that once the dam starts functioning and the airport gets electricity. If they are not fried that is." Saya then responds with a pleased tone.

"In other words, nothing we can take right now. It'd be dead weight for us." I fold my arms before turning to Saeko.

"Let's check the stairs?" I added as I waited for Saeko to stop looking around the warehouse.

"What about the door next to it?" Saeko asks as she turns to walk towards me.

"Elevator, doors are closed. Doubt they will open. And if the elevator is not on the top floor with the doors open, no reason to check it either." I respond.

"Oh, but do note that down Saya, just in case they send some total tools here and they decide to ignore the elevator because it was not in the summary..." I add as I turn to exit the room.

"Already did." Saya replies flatly.

With that, we exited the storage, and went straight to the stairs.

"The walls seem to be in better condition here." Saeko glances at the walls around the stairs as we start going up.

"Yea, the stairs seem to have some sort of coating too. They feel much smoother." I nod as we keep going up.

After reaching the top of the stairs, which took a turn to the right mid-flight. we end up in another hallway. This one, being brightly lit up. Next to us and to our right, a door. The same type as the one that was next to the stairs below, aka, the elevator.

(Elevator door is closed...)

On the opposite side of that door, and down the hallway, an expensive-looking wooden door. The hallway also had several windows on the right wall, them being the reason the hallway was not dark.

"Other than the corpses in the cinema room and bathroom, this place seems completely empty huh?" I tilt my head as I start heading towards the wooden door.

"You should be glad about that. Or is a horde not enough for you?"
Saya replies.

(Not going to deny that.)

After reaching the door, I try the knob. And the door starts to open with no resistance. And as the door opens.

"..." Both me and Saeko ended up staring straight towards the center of the room.

A single corpse, or, a single body. Hanging from the ceiling fan, swaying gently as its legs dangled a few feet off the ground.

"He looks well dressed." Saeko then speaks up.

"Owner of this place?" I ask.

"What did you find?" Saya asks right after.

"Uhh, body, hanging from a ceiling fan. Could have been the owner. Smells like he has been here some time..." I respond, Saya saying only an 'oh' as a response.

"In any case, check the room?" Saeko asks right after.

"Yeah." I nod slightly and walk into the room with Saeko.

Other than mister owner and the fan, the room was vastly different than the hallways that led here, as it was covered with treated, polished wood.

A single desk was behind the body, and a tall glass cupboard behind the desk. A set of windows to the right which let in enough sun in to let us have a clear view of the whole room, next to the windows was some sort of, bust statue of somebody I honestly did not know.

And on the opposite side of the window, where Saeko was now, a big bookcase.

(Let's make sure that the body ain't going to try to go horror movie scare jump trope on us.)

I walk up the body, and poke it with a shield. No reaction.

"He doesn't seem to be infected. Then again, corpses do not have any telltale signs that they are well, zombies..." I tilt my head as I glance at the desk behind him, then head up to it.

On it were a few papers, a mug which was still half full of coffee, an expensive-looking pen, and a set of keys. All haphazardly laid on the table.

"Wonder what the keys are for..." I whisper as I pick up the set of four keys.

(One of them is definitely for a car, the other three, I got no idea. His house? And this place?)

"There is a lot of liquor here..." Saeko then speaks up, and upon lifting my head. I found that she was now in front of the cupboard behind the table, peeking inside said cupboard while slightly bending over...

(Why are you wearing a skirt that stops doing its function the moment you slightly bend over again?...)

"Great, now we can make Molotov cocktails. All that is left is a Lada Riva, an Ushanka, and the ability to sneeze fire." I respond as I turn to look back at the keys.

"Uhh, why do we need all that? " Saya asks right after.

"To become Russians, obviously." I answer flatly.

"... Are the windows there closed?..." Saya asks right back.

"Uhh. Yea?..." I reply after glancing at the windows on the wall to my right.

"Then open them. I think the stagnant air in there is permanently damaging your brain." Saya added with a slight sigh.

(Why I'm not surprised...)

"Yeaaaa. So, uhh. Saeko, did you find anything?" I ask as I turn to look at the still bending-over girl...

"Not really..." She responds as she finally stands back up.

"Did you?" She asks back as she turns to look at me.

"Keys. If they belonged to the owner, maybe they can lock the back and front doors." I respond as I lift my hand, letting the keys dangle under my fingers.

"I see, should we go try them?" She asks right after.

"Yea, and Saya. We looked over the whole building. I think we're done here." I reply as I leave the room, Saeko following behind me.

"You sure? I don't need to tell you that I'll be showing this to my papa. And I won't be going to him a second time with an 'ohh, well, we found this too.'" Saya responds as I and Saeko move down the hallway.

(Afraid to annoy angry boss man huh? Well I don't blame you.)

"If I find something else I'll tell it to whoever will be sent here. Or they intend to make us return to the airport on foot while sending nobody to lock this place down?" I answer as we start going down the stairs.

"Yea, they will probably send more people to actually secure the place. You will probably leave with whatever they arrived in." As Saya speaks, I start to hear shuffling through the earbud.

"Well then, I will take what we have to my Papa, I'll tell you if something changes." She adds right after.

"Alright, we'll check the doors, then wait." I reply as I finish going down the stairs, then turn towards the closed back door.

"So, let's check these out. Though even if these keys lock the doors, we'll probably have to unlock the backdoor later. And, it's weird but it seems that this place has no way to go to the roof." I add as I look at the keys.

"Maybe the elevator went that far up?" Saeko asks right after.

"With no actual stairs? Weird building layout." I stop by the door as I keep speaking. And one by one, I check the keys. Other than the obvious car one.

Not that it took too long to find the correct key, since there were only three other keys to check...

"There, found it." I nod slightly as the third key slid in the keyhole and turned effortlessly.

"So the keys are for this building after all." Saeko adds as she folds her arms.

"Yea, so let's go lock the front door. It's not that I don't trust our barricade." I answer as I turn around.

"But I don't trust our barricade." I add as I start walking. Saeko following behind me.

"And after that?" She asks as we enter the matted hallways.

"We wait, I guess." I answer.

"Hmm, so that means our mission will be, over then?" Saeko replies from behind me...

(... Why do I suddenly feel, not safe?...)

With that, we moved to the front...

After reaching the front section of the building, we headed straight to the barricaded door. I then grabbed the table, and moved it out of the way.

(Hmm the keyhole is rather low on the door, nowhere near the corpse's hands.)

I lean on the sofa with one leg as I glance at the door, then turn to look at the keys.

(Let's see, this one was the back door, this is for the car. Between the last two keys, one looks normal, the other looks like a safety door key. Or, uhh, a keyblade. The door does not look that heavy, so I'll try the normal one.)

With that thought, I ready the normal key and try to insert it into the door's keyhole.

(Aight, that's the one.)

I nod slightly as I turn the key a couple of times.

"Well, that's that. Now, we wait I guess." I continued as I backed off from the door.

"You want to stay here?" Saeko asks right after.

"No, not really, the cinema rooms might be pitch black. But they are safer than this room. Let's go wait there." I respond as I turn to her.

"So, you are going to take me on a date to the movies then?" She 'asks' as she tilts her head slightly with a soft smile.

"Hey! Didn't I tell you not to goof off while you're on a mission!" Saya then shouts through my earbud...

"Saya, you know she can't hear you right?..." I ask as I fold my arms.

"You tell her then!" Saya replies with a huff.

"... That, we are on a mission?" I ask back.

"Yes you idiot!" Saya replies.

"... But didn't we just finish our mission?" I ask again.

"Wha. N, no you didn't, you are not finished until you actually return here." Saya responds, this time in a much lower tone.

"Let's go?" Saeko then speaks up, seemingly ignoring whatever Saya was fussing over...

"Don't ignore me!" And Saya shouts once again...

"... She can't hear you Saya..." I respond as I drop my shoulders slightly.

"I guess, I can not ask, to be just the two of us as my next favor, can I?" Saeko responds as she folds her arms, tilting her head slightly.

"Absolutely not!" Saya shouts, this time several decibels louder...

"I said that you can't ask for anything that will be to my detriment. I didn't play your stupid game..." Saya continues, her sentence sounding oddly, dejected. Like a kid that got left out...

"Uhh, let's get going, before we attract even more corpses on the front. Though it could be a bit too late for that. What with all the shouting..." I respond as I glance at the door, then motion Saeko to move with my head.

"I, it's not my fault you were being stupid..." Saya whines right after.

"... Wait, you mean to tell me that you don't mind if I get rip to shreds if I'm being stupid? Saya, that's cold..." I respond as I glance behind me towards the barricade.

"That's not what I said! S, stop being stupid already!" Saya shouts back...

"Naier, I do not mean to impose, but you should know. When you take a girl on a date, you need to pay more attention to her..." Saeko adds right after...

(... Oh god...)

I quickly pull my earbud off and...

" &*%&%^^%^! " An incomprehensibly loud, shriek, shout, whine. I honestly could not tell what it was, only that our dear Saya, had fizzled through whatever little fuse she had left...

(Ps. Ok, story aside. Some info, for the people that care.

As the ones that have been reading this story for quite some time by now have probably realized. The gap between each chapter release has increased from one to two weeks, to one month, or more.

The reason being is.

That for a couple of months now, I have been trying to kickstart my '3d meshing/texturing' venture on P-treon. Plus, trying to stream .

Essentially, I'm working on too many things at the same time. So the time I normally spent writing, pretty much goes everywhere else right now.

While I got no intention to drop this, I don't know when I'll be able to start posting more packed content again, or if quality will drop.

So yea. For the ones wondering, now you know. As for the why, I mean, come on, who likes rotting away in their day job?

-An update.-

This story will go on a halt for now as I'm working on an original story. It's here if any of you are wondering what it is.

www-fictionpress-com/u/1155731/Sereo

www-royalroad-com/fiction/43081/heros-resort/chapter/680677/a-heros-resort

Both sites have the same story.

Just change - with .)

Stock up

(It's not that I'm complaining...)

I was sitting on one of the comfortable cinema seats in the room that I and Saeko took a break in before, staring towards the blackness ahead of me. While Saeko, was with her head on my leg, having turned the next couple of seats next to me into a makeshift bed after lifting their armguards...

(But why is this room so damn dark? Here I am, with Saeko sleeping on my leg, yet I can't friggin see...)

I brought my hand to Saeko's head, and lightly ruffled her hair. To which she responded by giving out a soft moan while tightened her arms around my leg.

(Still, I didn't expect her to be this tired. I mean sure, she was running around like a hyperactive squirrel. And swinging that sword around like a helicopter blade...)

I lower my sight towards Saeko's head, the non-existent lighting making it pretty much impossible to actually see her.

(At least she ain't drooling on me, yet. I'm also, rather surprised that Saya actually stayed quiet after she went ballistic. Though something tells me that I'm going to spend some time running from a certain pink tornado after I return to the airport...)

With a slight sigh I lift my head, and with my free hand, open the flashlight on my helmet.

(Before all that though, we need to wait for the team that will take over. Apparently, we're waiting for a truckload of people and equipment. Something about setting up power transmission cables over the busted ones on their way here? Which I guess would explain why they're taking so long.)

I close my eyes and look towards the ceiling.

(But, if they're setting up infrastructure for electricity, does that mean that the team sent to the hydro-dam was successful? So does that also mean that we can now charge the laptop?...)

Finishing that though, I let out a chuckle.

(Here I am, Saeko sleeping on me, Saya pouting at me every time I'm paying more attention to our purple-haired Samurai instead of her. And still, I'm actually getting giddy from the fact that I might be able to play video games again. Some things just never change, do they?)

" *This is team Gamma. We will be arriving at the cinema at five. Cinema team, you copy? Over.*" And the earbud in my ear goes alive.

"Yea, note up that the front is probably overrun though. Over." I replied.

" *Roger, We've been informed of that earlier. Is the back entrance viable for a truck-sized vehicle? Over.*" The radio responds.

"I don't think so. From the little that I saw of the back alley, the best that could fit is a small-sized car. Over" I answer.

" *Understood, then we'll go on with the initial plan. Over*" The radio responds once again.

"Which is?" I ask back.

" *Excessive firepower. Over*" The radio answers flatly.

"Uhh, just try not to blow up the cinema as well..." I answer as I fold my arms.

" *No need to worry, we brought barricades. Over* " The radio responds just as flatly.

(Really now?)

And, after a few minutes of silence...

(Welp, guess It's time to wake the warrior princess.)

With that thought, I bring my hand to where Saeko's shoulder should be, and lightly shake her. Saeko responds by letting out a soft groan.

"Oi, time to get moving." I whisper as I keep shaking her. Saeko groans once more and tries to hide her face...

"... Fine. Have it your way then." I sigh as I fix my posture, lean over her, and pass one arm under her legs, then pass my other arm under her shoulder. And get up while carrying a still sleeping Saeko.

(Hmm, she's lighter than Saya. Weird, considering Saya is shorter. Then again, Saya has larger, uhh, assets. Plus Saeko has an overall thinner figure because of her training...)

And so, with a sleeping Saeko in my arms, I moved towards the exit. Thankfully, the door was a push-type, so I exited the room without much of a fuss. And then, I moved towards the front of the cinema...

After reaching the front of the building, I headed to the foodstuff counter and sat on it. Then put Saeko down again. Who, after some shuffling and essentially pushing her face up against my sides to hide from the invading light, kept on sleeping.

(Well, this 'seat' is much less comfortable, but at least I can see now. Without needing the flashlight.)

After stroking Saeko's hair for a few seconds, I turned my sight towards the front entrance, to the now 'calm' corpses. Who decided that they wanted to 'rest' with their arms still sticking out from the top of the door...

(Do corpses get sore?)

I let out a small chuckle, before taking a deep breath.

(Hmm, I wonder how the rest of the team is doing. While Rei can go suck it, I mean, she essentially wanted me to go jump off a cliff, literally. Kohta, Shizuka, and Alice never did anything to me. Takashi, is a mixed bag I guess...)

I lower my sight towards the sleeping girl as I keep stroking her hair..

(Makes me wonder how canon would have played out by now, had I not interfered. Saeko would probably be leaning towards Takashi, and Saya would lean towards Kohta, since our dear cop girl would have had a bullet between her eyes by now. Which would leave Rei to deal with an opponent she would probably have some 'trouble' dealing with, had Takashi been forced to pick. Which is funny, considering how she's been acting like a total bitch towards me, yet, I'm the reason she can have Takashi for herself. Not that I feel sorry for her, it's Takashi I should honestly feel sorry for, since he's stuck with a girl that picked him just because he 'was the next best choice'. If Hihashi was still alive? Takashi would have been in for a very bad time, especially if they stayed in as a group.

Other than that, the whole group would have also made it to the extraction point at the elementary school, where they would have had to deal with Shido once again, something that they definitely didn't have to do this time around...)

" *This is gamma. We can see the cinema. Get ready in there.*" And the radio speaks up again.

(Ready for what?...)

And just as I finish that thought. A loud gunshot, followed by another, then another. And the moment the first gunshot echoed, Saeko quickly darted her head up, turning to stare towards the entrance.

And after a few seconds...

"Uhh, where...." She mumbled as she started looking around...

"You didn't want to wake up soo..." I then speak up, causing Saeko to turn and face me.

"Oh..." Was all she mumbled as she kept staring at me.

The short silence that ensued getting interrupted by another set of gunshots, these sounding even closer than before.

"Well, guess our part here is done." I spoke up again as I put my hand on Saeko's shoulder, who was still leaning on my leg with her hand.

"Now I feel like I wasted all my time..." Saeko mumbles right after as turns to look towards the door.

"I din't mind, you did look quite cute after all." I add as I lightly stroke her shoulder.

Saeko turns to stare at me for a few seconds, before she starts smiling.

"Are you, sweet-talking me Naier?..." She asks as she slowly brings her face closer to mine, using her free hand to slowly lift my mask.

" *Alright break's over! Stop goofing off and get moving !*" And, before I could respond, a loud female voice shouts through my earbud. Loud enough that even Saeko apparently heard it, as she started giggling before pulling herself back.

"Will people believe me if I said that I went deaf from a screaming girl instead of actual gunshots?" I 'ask' as I get off the counter while lowering my half lifted mask.

" *S,shut up stupid! Now get moving! The new team must be right outside your door.* " Saya grumbles back.

(Extra grumpy...)

"Uhh, not exactly, they are still trying to cut in line." I add as I look towards the door, gunshots still echoing outside.

" *Well be ready...*" Saya replies, this time with a much calmer tone.

"Yes, of course." I retort as I walked up to the door. The corpses that had been crowding over it now nowhere to be seen.

"Won't all this gunfire attract way more of these things here?..." I ask as I lean towards the broken glass on the front door to look outside.

"They don't seem to mind." Saeko adds as she sits on the couch we used to make the makeshift barricade.

It took another couple of minutes until I actually saw the first signs of life, other than that constant gunfire that is.

Two small military jeeps, a big fire truck, and a military truck.

"Huh? There's a line extending from the firetruck, towards..." I speak up as I keep looking outside.

"A nearby electrical pylon? So that's how they're doing it..." I add as I tilt my head.

"Alright, let's get rid of everything in front of the door." I continue as I back off, Saeko nodding and getting off the couch.

And a few minutes later, the front door was now clear, and wide open.

"Ok, now what?" I ask as I finally walk out of the cinema with Saeko, the corpses that used to occupy the other side now littering the road to my right .

And, as if to answer my question, the two jeeps zoomed past me, only to stop a little further down, followed then by the fire truck, letting the military truck stop right in front of the cinema.

"Alright people! Move move! I want this place locked down tighter than a politician's purse!" A standing man decked out in full military combat gear shouts as the tailgate of the truck drops down.

A couple of soldiers then quickly jumped down and turned to look towards the truck as another couple of soldiers tossed a set of orange, fillable barricades at them. And as the first set of soldiers quickly moved away with the barricades, a next set of soldiers then followed after the first two, carrying bags full of sand on their shoulders.

The whole thing replaying a couple of times as soldiers quickly encircled the cinema's front road with barricades.

The man in combat gear then turns to us.

"You two! Go to the second jeep! It'll be returning to the airport in five!" He continues as he points towards the two jeeps to our left..

I nod, and turn to look at Saeko, who was holding the 'ripped' part of her shirt with her free hand.

(... Uhh, should I feel so proud of myself right now? Because she was casually flashing her chest at me when we were alone, while now she's putting actual effort to cover it?

My Lizard brain tells me yes. My Intellectual brain just groans. My Gamer brain tells me that fighting kulve Taroth could be considered sexual harassment...)

As we closed in towards the second jeep, it's driver popped his head out of the window to look at us.

"Well shiet, and here I thought they were pulling my leg, it really is just two people. Get in!" He motions with his head before pulling himself back inside the car.

With that, both me and Saeko enter the back seats of the jeep.

"Alright, we're set." I speak up as I remove the shield and place it over a couple of bags that were laid on the trunk.

"Good, let's bail, I'm starting to see a lot of them dead freaks on the road ahead of us." The driver responds.

"This is jeep Betta, I'm moving out. Keep an eye on the road that Jeep Alpha is parked on, I'm seeing a lot of movement down the road. Over." He adds as he presses the speak button on the radio in his chest pocket.

" This is jeep Alpha, requesting to move the vehicle inside of the barricade. Over. " The radio answers.

" Roger that Alpha, we'll move the barricades for Betta to pass though, enter along and park inside. You there! Open the barricade, then take a team of five and prepare to set up a firing range! " The radio responds again.

" And put a second damn row once the jeeps are in! I want this place to be unbreachable once we're done! " The radio continues.

"... He sure shouts a lot..." I whisper as we pass through the barricade.

"Wait till you see him drunk." The driver chuckles as he drives through the other side of the barricade....

"By the uhh way. Is your friend alright? She keeps clutching her chest." He continues as he glances at the rearview mirror.

"My shirt got ripped." Saeko answers right after.

"Oh. Ohhhh." He exclaims as he then glances at me.

"You just couldn't hold yourself huh?" He chuckles.

I just sigh and shake my head as he finishes speaking.

And like that, the jeep drove down the road, with the occasional bump from the unmoving corpses that littered the road.

"You guys really cleaned house on your way here huh. Not a single moving corpse." I muttered as I kept looking out of the window.

"Of course, had we not done that we'd have freaks coming from both directions. We'd have popped faster than an ugly forehead pimple." The driver cackles.

"... Nice, equivalent. And now I need to get the damn image out of my head." I respond with a groan.

"Fine, we'd have gotten ripped apart faster than you ripped your girl's undies in that cinema." The driver snickers back...

"Now just..." Right as I was about to answer back, Saeko scooted over next to me and leaned her head on my shoulder, hugging my left arm in the process...

(And you ain't really helping like this...)

"Hoo-hoo now, don't go getting nasty in ma car people. Unless I can join the fun, otherwise it's not allowed." The driver chirps as he turns to look at us with a grin.

"Eye's on the road bub. You might hit a squirrel." I respond as I lean my back on the back seat.

(Does this count as flexing?)

The driver just cackled again as he turned to face the road...

With that, we went on in relative silence...

Or, we would have. As...

"Dum, tap ta tststs. Pap pap pat, Piuoououou!" The driver was shaking his upper body as he kept 'signing'...

(... What, did I do to deserve this...)

"Pit,pit,pit. PowwauuaUOOOAAA SHIT!" And the moment he took a right on the intersection, his singing got cut short as he stomped the breaks. The reason? A giant horde, heading straight our way.

"Oh fucking shit!" The driver exclaims as he switches to reverse, while tapping on his radio.

"This is betta! We have a giant ass horde marching down here! About, uh, one and a half klick away from the cinema!" He shouts.

" Keep them out of our way Beta! We have our hands full here! You there! Bring me a count on our munitions! And you! Bolster the left corner! And where the fuck is the engineer I called for?!" The radio 'responds'. A constant sound of gunfire echoing through the radio...

"Uhh, Roger that. Over..." The driver answers with a rather disheartened voice.

"And how the hell am I supposed to 'keep them out of our way'..." He adds as he tries to mimic the high-ranking officer's voice.

"The road opposite of the horde, the one behind us. Can you use that road to reach the airport?" I ask as I glance behind me.

"Probably. It has not been scouted yet." The driver answers.

"So, just jam the horn and drive on that road, it should make the horde go straight towards us." I responded.

"As I said, that road has not been scouted yet, I can't risk driving down on it with a horde in toe, what if it's blocked later down?" The driver turns to look at me as he shakes his head.

"Hmm, I don't see any high buildings around here for us to scout from either..." I sigh.

"Did you bring any explosives with you?" Saeko asks right after.

"Nope..." I respond flatly.

"Uhh..." I then turn to look behind me again, then to my left, at the road that was 'ahead' of the cinema...

"Ok, I got an idea. Drive to the left and wait." I speak up as I turn to exit the car.

"O,k?" The driver answers as he frowns slightly.

Just as I turn to close the door, I find Saeko was already exiting the car as well.

"... I should not even bother to ask you to wait, should I?..." I 'ask' as she completely exits the jeep.

"Glad to see that we understand each other." She answers with a small smile.

"Alright, drive up the road and wait, we'll be back shortly. Oh and shut the engine off." I lean into the car as I speak, before leaning back out and closing the door, not really waiting for an answer.

The driver moves his mouth as if to say something, and then moves to turn the car towards the road that was now ahead of me.

"So, what is the plan Naier?" Saeko asks as she places her hand on her blade's hilt.

"Easy really, we go to the road to our left, I open fire, and then we run back to the jeep. And honk the horn a couple of times as we move away." I respond as I turn to run towards the road to our left. Saeko nods, and starts running after me...

After running a few meters in, I turn around to face the horde. While Saeko drew her blade and dashed towards the nearest corpse, which was honestly still several meters away from us, but, I guess she just couldn't bypass the chance to teach it how to use division on itself...

"Alright..." I let out a short breath, lift my rifle, aim, and pull the trigger a couple of times.

(Ok, that shout be enough.)

"Saeko! Come on!" I shouted as I started to run towards the center of the intersection again...

(Ok, to the car now.)

Without stopping, I turn to my left. Saeko following in toe right next to me. And, the moment I reached the jeep. I opened the door and took a step back, then pointed inside as I looked towards Saeko. Who nodded and entered the jeep.

(And now, we wai....huh?...)

And right before entering the jeep myself, I looked through the window on the other side of the car...

"Uhh, wait here a jiff." I added as I closed the door with me still outside, Saeko turning to look at me with a confused expression.

The reason?...

(I know this is completely stupid. But, I'm not letting this chance pass.)

I glance around me before running straight towards a nearby game store...

It's glass front completely shattered, several corpses standing still in the relatively dark insides...

(If we're getting electricity. That laptop will need some 'software upgrades')

And the moment I stepped into the store, I drew my blade...

The layout was pretty simple really, a giant square room, with three rows of two-sided shelves, which created a total of five corridors. And on the far side I could see the cashier's counter.

Now the corridors themselves were littered with DVDs and DVD cases, some open, some closed, some ripped in half. And of course, 'customers'...

(Ok, the second corridor has only two of them, I take them down, fill my bag with whatever's worth it, and bail.)

And right as I take a step forward.

"The left one is mine." A female voice whispers to my left. Glancing towards it, I find Saeko standing right next to me, blade drawn.

"What? No snarky remark that I'm a nerd?" I chuckle as I dash forward. All Saeko did, was giggle.

The moment I reached the corpse to the right, which was leaning against the shelf with its hand. I bring down my blade in a vertical slash, severing the thing's arm from the elbow.

The corpse, now one arm short, begins to turn to face me. Only to end up with a blade jammed in its forehead. And as its legs buckle, I knock it back with a quick stomp to the chest.

I then throw a quick glance to my left, to find Saeko sheathing her blade. The second corpse unmoving on the floor in front of her.

I take off my bag, open it, and quickly start tossing any game that caught my eye into it.

(Thank god for retail releases...)

After a couple of seconds of looting, I closed my bag and turned to look at Saeko, who was looking at the back cover of a DVD case.

"Let's go, before the driver decides to bail on us." I whisper as I tap Saeko's shoulder, she responds by glancing at me and nodding.

And with that over, I began to run back out. Only to stop right by the exit, my eyes locking with a set of pc controllers.

(... Oh, gimi two of those. Because driving games with a keyboard are a big friggin no-no)

With that thought, I shoved two controllers in the bag and ran towards the jeep for real this time. Which was thankfully still there. And, there was also another thing...

The road to my right, the one we used to come here, now had the horde passing through...

(... Oh damn, that's a lot of corpses...)

Without speaking I open the jeep's door and motion Saeko to enter. And after she got in, I leaned in the jeep myself.

"Don't turn on the engine yet." I whisper as I enter it completely, then silently close the door.

"Oh sure, let's just stay here while a damn parade of dead freaks is marching down a couple of meters away from us." The driver groans.

"And what will happen if you turn on the engine right now? You'll split the horde in two, which will make it harder to track. And, are we not relatively close to the airport?" I ask. The driver just groaned again as he shook his head.

"And what did you even need from that shop?" The driver asks right after.

"Just some things to pass the time." I respond flatly. The driver turning to look at me with an arched eyebrow.

"Naier, If you do not mind me asking such a silly question..." Saeko adds right after. And upon turning to look at her, I find her looking at the cover of the case she was holding.

"The whole cover on this. Why is it just a dismembered hand floating in space?" She asks as she shows me the case. On it, a single, armored dismembered hand, drifting in space...

(Out of all the stuff you could pick, it had to be Isaac Clarke and his adventures in nopeland?...)

"Uhh, yea, and it honestly captures the essence of what you'll find inside pretty well. For the first game at least." I respond as I take the case, then put it inside my bag.

"Interesting..." Was all Saeko responded with...

"Wait, wait wait wait. You went in there to grab video games?" The driver asks with a slight frown.

"Yes." I respond flatly.

"Uhhh. Are you trying to break up with your girl?" He 'asks' as he glances at Saeko.

"Excuse, me?" Saeko asks back as she tilts her head.

"We all know that gamers can't have sexy girlfriends." The driver answers with a slight chuckle.

"But hey, be my guest, I won't say no to more free hot chicks in my area." He adds right after. I just, shake my head again.

(I'm really, not in the mood to humor him...)

"Naier..." Saeko then leans towards me, placing her hand on my hip as she closes her face towards mine.

"You, are not going to start ignoring me now? Are you?..." She 'asks' with a rather, tempting voice.

"Whoooo-daaaaam~" The driver chimes, his face pretty much looking like the one from true detective smoking meme, except he had no cigarette...

"Depends, how often you'll want to break every single bone of my favorite characters?" I respond as I stare back at her.

"Hmm, and what makes you think I would want to do that?" She retorts with a slight giggle as she leans back to a normal posture.

(You know that I know that you very well know 'what' makes me think that.)

"... Oh, by the way, the horde's gone." The driver then adds as he points behind us with his finger.

"Let's get out of here then." I continue as I glance behind me.

And with that, the driver turns on the jeep once again and starts driving.

"Hmmm, do you see any address signs around here?" The driver asks as he starts to slow down at the next intersection.

"Five- twenty six, Yamashitacho, Date-shi, Tokonosu" Saeko responds as she keeps looking through the window next to her.

"Thanks. This is Beta, we have a large-sized horde by, Five- twenty six, Yamashitacho, Date-shi, Tokonosu. Heading..." The driver stops talking on his radio and glances around, narrowing his eyes slightly.

"Ughhh, the airport is, this way. So..." He whispers as he points his finger ahead and to his right.

"Heading Northwest. Over." He continues.

" *Copy that Beta. Over .*" The radio responds.

"Now, let's get back to the damn airport yea?" The driver groans as he turns right at the intersection we had stopped on...

Return to the airport

"This is jeep Beta from the cinema team. I'm closing in on the main airport checkpoint. Please don't blow us up. Over." The driver said while pressing a button on his radio. The fenced-out area before the airport becoming larger by the second, along with piles of burnt corpses...

The sky was also starting to dim by now, as the sun decided it was time to free dive into the sea.

"Roger that Beta. Welcome back. Over." The radio answers.

"So, what are the chances they'll leave me alone now?" I 'ask' as I fold my arms.

"I'd reckon about the same chance of them undead freaks acting civilized." The driver chuckles.

(Yea, seems about right...)

And a few minutes later, we finally were by the gate...

(Home sweet home huh...)

"Alright you two, free ride's over." And the driver speaks up as we enter the camp, stopping the vehicle a little further down.

(Not going to argue with that, with how you've been staring at Saeko...)

And as I exit the jeep with all my equipment...

"Hmm? Hey Naier, is that Saya waiting a bit down the road?" Saeko speaks up, pointing at the road ahead of us. And sure enough, a twin-tailed pinkette was waiting by the road, arms folded and glancing around.

"Uhh, don't think a lot of people here have pink twintails soo..." I responded as I tilt my head.

"Aight, thanks for the ride." I add as I tap on the jeep's roof and back off. The jeep then starts driving off. Only to stop a few seconds later, in front of the pinkette...

(... Really now?)

I hold myself back from chuckling as I start heading towards the jeep's new stop point...

"He's relentless, I'll give him that..." I whisper as I keep walking.

"If only he used all that energy for something more productive." Saeko adds while walking next to me.

And, as we closed in...

"I said I'm waiting for somebody. Go away you damn idiot." The piknette hisses with an annoyed expression.

"Aww come on girl, you don't have to be so hostile~" The driver, who was with his left arm and head out of the jeep responds with a chuckle.

(... That's Saya alright. Uhh, I 'would' like to joke about how she's goofing off with another guy. But with Saeko next to me? It's going to backfire worse than a rusty shotgun held by low-grade duct tape...)

"Hmm, I even have my own welcoming party? Well, I'm moved." I speak up as I walk up next to the jeep. Saya turns to look at me, annoyed frown still on her face.

"Naier!" And her face instantly lights up. Only to turn into pout again the moment she saw Saeko.

"Huh?..." The driver then also turns to look at me, having the frown of a fat kid that got interrupted while eating its favorite giga

chocolate...

"See you met Saya..." I add as I turn to look at the driver...

"Oh! Man you know her? Perfect~ Hook me up!" The driver chuckles as glances at Saya's, lower half.

"Eww!" Was all Saya responded with as she trotted up to me, grabbed my hand, and turned to walk away while dragging me along...

The driver just stared at me as I turned to wave at him.

"Oh come on! Both?!" I heard the driver cry out from behind...

(Weird flex me, but ok...)

Other than that, I kept silent as Saya kept dragging me along, Saeko casually walking next to me...

"By the way, Saeko. Your father wants to speak to you as soon as possible." Saya then speaks up as she stops dragging me and turns to look at both of us.

"I see, thank you for informing me. I will go get changed and head to him then." Saeko replies with a slight bow. She then starts to walk away, only to turn towards me a few steps later.

"Naier, I hope you do not mind, but I will hold on to your jacket for a bit longer." She adds with a smile before turning to walk again, and...

(Huh? did she just smirk at Saya as she turned around, or I'm seeing crap?...)

Turning to glance at Saya, I found that her expression was even poutier than before...

(Nope, she did smirk at her alright...)

"So, uh, any new commands from our dear fatass general?" I ask, essentially, trying to create a subject...

"I haven't seen him. He's probably with my papa at the airport." Saya lets out a small sigh as she turns to me.

"An aircraft carrier arrived there while you were away. And they seem to be preparing to flip the light switch on this place as well..." She adds as she folds her arms.

"Hmm? They managed to activate the dam?" I ask back, and Saya just nods.

"Niiccee. Now I'll have a way to charge the laptop..." I chuckle as I also fold my arms.

"Ughh, come on you nerd, is that the only thing that you can think of? Sims is not that fun anyway..." Saya groans as she rolls her eyes.

"Ohh yes, me agrees with that. That's why I went shopping. You won't believe the discounts. They're to, kill for..." I retort as I bring my bag in front and open it, then pull a random video game case out of the bag. Saya's eyebrows turning into a straight line as she disapprovingly stared at the case.

"First, your jokes are as lame as always. Second, are you for real?..." She groans as she kept looking at the case.

"You risked your life, for a bunch of video games?..." She adds as she turns to stare at me.

"Yyyyes." I respond flatly.

"Why are you so, stupid? Stupid..." Saya shakes her head as she brings her hand to her forehead.

"Aww, and here I was excited that we could play together. I even got two controllers for some co-op...." I respond as I lower my head and

act all disheartened, pulling the two controllers from the bag as I let out a huge sigh. Saya stared at me for a few seconds...

"Uhh, w, well. Since you went through all that trouble. I guess I could, do you a favor..." Saya retorts as she glances away, folding her arms under her chest.

"And force you to do something you don't like? I just can't bring myself to torture you like that." I dramatically shake my head as I close my bag.

"Well Saeko did seem quite interested in one, maybe I can..."

"AAaaarh! Fine fine, stop! J, just shut up! I do want to play with you! Ok you dumb idiot!?" Saya exclaims as she stomps her foot on the floor, turning to stare at me with a blush.

"Perfect, why didn't you just say so~" I respond as I do a complete three-sixty on my mood, closing my bag and passing it over my shoulder again.

"Soo, uhh, can I go and leave all this crap now?" I ask right back as I tap my shield.

"... Why are you asking me?" Saya asks back as she pouts...

"... Because you still have my keys..." I reply flatly.

" O, oh. R, right..." She mumbles as she lowers her head slightly, then, after searching her pockets for a few seconds, she pulls the keys out of her jacket's pocket and hands them over to me. All the while, she was intently staring at them, even after she gave them to me.

"Is something wrong?" I ask as I pocket the keys.

"N, nothing! Come on, move it!" Saya blurts out as she turns to walk towards the main building at a quick pace...

(Hummm, my minus ten perception tells me she's hiding something.)

And with that, I started following Saya towards the main building...

Upon reaching it, we started going up the stairs. And, well...

(Oh, panty shot. Oh, panty shot. Oh, panty shot. Oh, panty shot. Oh, panty shot. Oh, panty shot. Blue and white stripes. Is that a bear face? Nope, it looks more like a cat. Or is it a parrot? Hmm might be a mouse.)

Yea, Saya was ahead of me, and she was wearing her 'normal' school skirt. Which plainly speaking, was way too damn short for stairs...

(Our school had a lot of stairs, Saya's school skirt is supposed to be the normal school skirt. No wonder Shido worked there...)

And, after finally reaching the floor with our rooms, we headed straight to my room.

"Can they bring electricity back right about now?..." I chuckle as I open the door, and...

"AAAAAHH!" Saya essentially slaps me out of the way and enters the room by herself, slamming the door shut behind her...

(... Uhhh, what just happened?...)

After a couple of seconds of blankly blinking at my door. The door to Saeko's room opens up, said purple-haired samurai walking out, dressed in a white kimono.

With a quick glance around, she then turned to look at me. While I was still standing next to my door, arm extended with my keys still in hand...

"Did something happen Naier?" Saeko asks as she tilts her head...

"I think Saya is leveling her screaming ghost lady skills..." I responded as I kept staring at the door.

"S, shut up! It's just! Just shut up! It's nothing! Don't come inside yet!" Saya shouts through the closed door...

I turn to look at Saeko as I shrug, who just brought her hand to her mouth as she giggled.

"Going to see your father?" I ask as I keep looking at Saeko.

"Yes." She responds as she turns to close her door.

"Won't hold you then." I add as I nod.

(The last thing I need is capiten Silver fang on my ass.)

"You can wait in my room if you want." She adds as she stops closing the door..

"Nahh, I don't think the 'refurbishing' will take that long." I responded with a slight shrug.

"S, shut up!" The angry pinkette shouted again.

With a last chuckle, Sakeo closes her door, bows at me, and turns to leave.

(... Shame, I didn't even manage to get a glimpse of 'what' made Saya freak out. I could open the door. But I don't want to deal with the aftershock of such an action right now. As long as I don't find some faceless bald dude's underwear under my bed.)

I shake my head as I groan.

(Then again, I'm not one to speak...)

With that thought, I fold my arms, and walk to the wall opposite of my door, then lean my back against it, and start waiting for Saya to finish

whatever she was doing in there...

-A few minutes later... -

'Yawn-'...

(Uhhh, she sure is taking her time. What the hell did she do there...)

And just as I finished that thought, the door opened. Saya behind the door, looking like she just tackled an angry bear...

"Should I ask.."

"No!" Saya grumbles back loudly...

"Ok..." I respond with a slight shrug as I walk up to the door, and then enter the room. Which looked completely normal.

(Huh, nothing is... wait a minute...)

The laptop Saya had with her from her room was on my desk. And my bed looked a bit 'used'. As if somebody was rolling around on the blankets, and then tried to straighten it, but didn't know how to do so correctly. Say like, a rich kid that probably never bothered to do her bed before?...

(... Ehh, let's leave her to think that she got away with it. Since she tried so hard.)

I then walk up to the wardrobe next to the bed and open it. Inside it were several sets of black clothes, along with the stuff I looted from the S.A.T van on our initial trip from the overrun extraction outpost to here.

I then take off my earbud, mic, shield, Scar-H, helmet, and vest. And place them next to all the stuff I looted.

(I'll need more space if I keep stocking up on crap like that. Can I increase the storage size of this thing? Maybe an upgrade or two?

Wooden planks and stone axes anybody?)

"What are you staring at?" Saya asks as she folds her arms.

"The nonexistent space in my wardrobe." I responded.

"Then stop gathering useless stuff?" Saya retorts.

"How is any of this useless?" I ask back with a chuckle as I close the wardrobe.

"Do you really need a second set of arm and leg guards? And three more belts? Nine different-sized ammo pouches? Three combat knives?... Handcuffs?" Saya keeps her arms folded as she keeps speaking with a slight frown...

(... Ok, now she's asking for it.)

"Saya..." I take a deep breath as I turn to her.

"... Were you searching my wardrobe?" I ask flatly.

"O, of course I was not you idiot! I could see all that stuff from where I was standing!" Saya responds as her eyes go wide for a few seconds, before she frowns even more than before, leaning her body towards me as she narrows her eyes.

"... Saya. The knives and belts were inside a drawer." I retort.

"Yea, so what?" She huffs back.

"Which I didn't open." I continue.

"Uhh, well I, I, I saw them anyway!" Saya answers back as she glances away...

"And count them?" I ask as I smirk slightly.

"Y, yes!" Saya responds as she nods.

"I'm a genius! I have very good eyesight!" She blurts out right after.

"Uhh, how does one conne..."

"It just does! Now stop asking stupid questions! Stupid!" Saya cuts me off as she stomps her foot on the floor, turning to look at me with puffed-up cheeks.

(Damn, she really doesn't want to admit that she's been sticking her nose in my stuff huh?)

"Alright, alright~" I chuckle as I head to the desk that the laptop was on, then leave my bag and turn around.

"Hum, about time you stopped being stupid..." Saya mumbles as she silently comes along with me.

(... Hmmm?)

"Oh and one last thing." I smirk slightly as I raise my finger.

"What, I told you I didn't..."

"You missed a corner." I chuckle as I point at the lower corner of the bed, the cover sticking out from under the mattress...

Saya quickly darts her head to the bed, takes one big step towards the bed, then quickly stops.

"I, I didn't make your bed stupid, why would I have made your bed. Hum!" Saya replied as she huffed, closing her eyes and turning her head slightly towards the ceiling.

(Damn, the princess mode is strong in this one.)

I shake my head and turn to the laptop.

"How much battery does this thing have left?" I ask...

"Not enough..." Saya answers with a slight pout on her face.

"Hmm, don't they have electricity in the comms tower?" I ask back.

"Umm, well, ahhh...." And Saya's bravado instantly fades...

"Ogot... theble..." She whispers as she keeps glancing about.

"You got the blue?" I tilt my head as I turn to her with a slight frown.

"I forgot the cable!" She barks back with a deep blush on her face.

"And they won't let anybody in the tower unless they are 'on a mission.'" She continues as she keeps looking away.

"Oh well, guess that can wait till we get some actual electricity in the building then." I shrug as I look out the window, towards the road to the side of the building. Where a lot of tents were set up, 'civilians' crammed up all around. All the while soldiers with big carts were moving in rows, handing out what I think were rations.

"Is it just me, or there seem to be more refugees down there?..." I ask as I tilt my head. Saya trots up to me to also look out the window.

"There, are?..." She asks as she keeps looking down.

"I'm pretty damn sure that place was not 'that' cluttered last time I saw it from up here..." I responded as I tilt my head...

"You think the carrier that just arrived had refugees on it?" Saya asks as she glances at me.

"Won't be surprised if it did, especially if they used helicopters to evacuate people. It would be a very safe midpoint. Plus they could easily dispatch civilians with needed professions from there, like doctors, engineers, electricians. I know the military is supposed to have people of said professions, but I don't think they'd be enough

for the amount of personnel they really need right now..." I lean on the desk as I speak.

"Well, it doesn't concern us. And I do believe that everybody needs to do their part in this. Sitting on your ass and demanding things will get you so far before you get a boot in your face." Saya retorts as she turns away from the window and heads to the bed then sits on its side.

"True that." I respond as I also turn around, walk past the bed, and to the wardrobe.

"Where are you going?" Saya asks as she turns her upper body around to face me.

"Uhh, I'm thinking of taking that hot bath your mother mentioned." I answer as I open the wardrobe and take a new set of clothes.

"... Ahh, about, that...." Saya mumbles as she glances away.

"Umm, I think, that was a one-time thing..." She continues.

"... Say what now?" I ask as I arch an eyebrow.

"Ever since that day, the water has remained cold. I asked my Mama about it. She told me they don't have the water heaters hooked on the generator grid all of the time. Something about deterring people from spending too much water. As bringing back water lines is more complex than electricity. They have to restart the water recycling center, and the water reclamation center, along with the pumps. Plus make sure the water is safe to drink, like for example if a corpse gets stuck in a pipe and keeps polluting the water..." Saya responds.

"Hmm. Did you know all that? Marked me impressed." I chuckle as I take off the rest of my headgear.

"O, of course I do, I'm...."

"A genius." I cut her off with a slight smirk. Saya just sticks out her tongue at me.

"Even though it was my mama that told me all that..." She whispers as she glances away.

(... She knows I can hear her, right?...)

"Welp, cold water it is then. As the alternative is walking around in the clothes I used to clear a cinema full of corpses." I groan with a slight sigh as I start walking towards the bathroom.

"W, wait. N, now?" Saya asks as her eyes go slightly wide.

"Uhh, yes?" I responded.

"Does it have to be right now?" Saya asks again as she pouts. Slightly puffing up her cheeks as she turns to look away.

"You want to cuddle with somebody who's covered in blood?..." I ask as I chuckle.

"O, of course not you idiot!" Saya shouts back as she glances at me.

"So you're saying that I should 'not' be wearing clothes?" I respond as I smirk at her.

"AAA! I, I didn't say that either! Pervert!" Saya yelps as a heavy blush starts to creep on her face.

"Soo, can I..."

" *Saya? This is your father, I need you by the airport as soon as possible.* " And before I could finish speaking, her radio came alive...

(Really? What's with the timing? He has a camera installed in here or something?)

"Wha... oh come on!" Saya turns to look at the radio in her jacket's pocket before stomping her foot on the floor while still sitting on the bed...

"Why does this always happen to me..." She whines as she picks her radio. And after taking a deep breath.

"Ok Papa, I'm coming..." She continues with a calm tone.

" *Good.* " The radio replies flatly.

And, a few rather awkward seconds of silence.

"I, I should get going...." Saya jumps to her feet, and walks around the bed to head towards the exit.

(... Hmm, I just got a retarded idea...)

"Saya." Right as she passes by me, I call out to her.

"What, I got to h..."

Yet as she turned around and before she could finish her sentence, I put my hand under her chin to align her face to mine, then locked lips with her...

Saya stood completely still, like a deer staring at headlights. Even after I backed off from her, she didn't move. Ok, like a deer at headlights might be the wrong equivalent. As she just stood there with her eyes closed. Her head leaning forward...

And after a few seconds, she slowly opened her eyes...

"M, more..." She mumbled as she kept staring at me.

"Don't get greedy now." I respond as I pat her head.

Saya pouts slightly as she keeps staring at me. But other than that, she didn't react.

"It's not fair. Saeko gets to have you for the whole day. All I get is a stupid kiss..." She mumbles as she grabs my shirt with both hands.

"True, but Saeko didn't get, this~" I respond as I bring my hands to her sides, and squeeze.

(Damn, this is addicting...)

Saya yelps as starts wiggling about.

"H, Hey! No groping!" She squeaks as she throws a couple of quick slaps on my chest, before retaliating by jabbing my own sides. And well, since I was not wearing my vest...

I grab both her arms, bring them behind her back and I wrap my arms around her, essentially immobilizing her. Saya squirmed for a couple of seconds, before finally giving up and resting her head on my chest.

"I, don't want to go..." She whispers with her eyes half-closed.

"Not much we can do about that, unless you want to stay in a tent packed with unwashed survivors." I respond as I chuckle.

"Aaaa, ugh! Did you have to say that!" Saya groans as she grimaces.

"I'm giving you motivation." I chuckle as I let her go.

"Then do it in a more romantic way! Stupid..." She huffs as she folds her arms.

"Sorry, that skill has no levels." I respond as I smirk.

"Idiot..." Saya mumbled.

"Just remember to leave my key this time around ahh?" I chuckle as I turn to walk towards the bathroom.

"Why, afraid I might creep up on you while you sleep?" Saya asks as she smirks at me.

"On the contrary, I might have to creep up in 'your' room while you sleep, if you have my keys." I respond as I open the bathroom door.

"Hum, pervert..." Saya huffs as she pulls my keys from her pocket, but keeps looking at them instead of leaving them.

"Or, is that what you want? Me to creep up on you, while you're sleeping, half-naked?" I smirk once more as I look at her.

"W, wipe that perverted smirk from your face! Pervert!" She yelps as she tosses me the keys.

"Not unless you stop blushing like you're fantasizing about what I just said." I chuckle as I grab the keys mid-air, then turn to enter the bathroom...

"S, STUPID!" Saya barks out as I close the bathroom door behind me.

(Well she didn't deny it...)

-30 minutes later-

You know what's worse than running out of hot water?

Not having it in the first place.

"Hoooo damn, I hate, cold water..." I grumble as I finish dressing up, my old clothes neatly folded on the counter next to the sink...

"Ok, let's get before I turn into an icicle." I clap my hands a couple of times as I exit the bathroom. And get greeted by an empty room.

"Soooo, now what?" I fold my arms as I look around the room, my eyes stopping on the laptop.

"Hmm, you think we might be lucky? I didn't actually try to open it." I ask myself as I walk up to it and press the power button.

"Niope..." I then pick the charging cable, and put it in a socket....

"Uhhh, double niope...." I sigh as I pull the cable out again. Then turn to look out the window.

"Welp, I don't feel like sleeping sooo, let's go outside I guess?" I nod to myself as I turn to head towards the exit, grabbing and wearing my headgear and keys in the process.

"And why do I keep speaking to myself?" I ask myself as I exit my room, then turn to lock it.

After throwing a glance at the doors that led to Saeko's and Saya's rooms respectively. I turned to leave the floor through the stairs...

"Still, what to do? Not exactly big on outings..." I whisper as I put my hands in my pockets...

I then reached the relatively crowded bottom floor. And then, I exited the building.

(You know, let's go to the airport. I've never seen an aircraft carrier up close.)

I nod to myself, and turn to walk towards the bridge that connects the mainland with the airport...

On my way there, I passed next to the tents I saw from my room, the civilian camp.

(Hmm, I was right, there are more people in civilian clothing sitting about now. More food to give to a bunch of squatters that do nothing all day eh?...)

I shake my head as I keep going.

(Hah, I really did turn out to be quite an ass huh? I'd rather let them starve if they don't contribute? Good thing for them I'm not the one to decide who gets food then...)

With that thought, I turn to look at the sky, the constant buzzing of helicopters flying overhead.

(And I'm pretty sure I'm seeing more helicopters flying about. Probably the ones from the aircraft carrier?)

And, as if to seal the deal of the carrier's presence, I saw a single jet take off from the direction of the airport. Which then flew off towards the main city to the right.

(... Uhh, wait, is it really a good idea to launch jets from here? We're bound to get a big ass horde that the flamethrower guards won't be able to deal with if we keep making this much noise. Not that the helis are any less quiet though...)

With a casual pace, I kept moving. Until I finally reached the bridge...

And, after getting on it, in the distance, I saw a single jeep parked on the side. A person with his head and arm out of the driver's window. Next to the driver's door, a woman.

(... Tell me that's the driver that brought us here hitting on somebody again...)

I chuckle as I focus on the woman.

Long blond hair tied to their end with a red ribbon, excessively large chest, a white top, and a black long skirt, all the while she was hugging a bag...

I blink a couple of times before picking up the pace, making a beeline towards the woman.

(You, gotta be pulling my leg...)

And as I closed in to the jeep...

"Shizuka right? Just hop on the passenger's seat and I'll get you there in no time. Pretty women get a free ride~" The jeep's driver chimes as he smirks at Shizuka...

"Umm, I'm just, a little lost..." Shizuka answers with a worried expression on her face.

(... I'm About to End This Man's Whole Career...)

"Shizuka, are you bothering strangers again?" I speak up as I stop next to her, the driver's smirk turning into a frown before turning to look at me. And, the moment he 'did' look at me...

A few seconds of silence...

"No God! No God please no! No! No! Nooooooooooooo!" And the driver starts shouting as he retreats back into his car, and starts punching the car's horn, with his head...

"Ummm, are you alright? Sir? I am sorry. Umm I'm, uuuu..." Shizuka just kept staring at the man during his mental breakdown, apparently thinking that she was the reason he was freaking out.

(She just completely ignored me. Didn't she?)

"... Now look at what you did..." I add as I keep looking at the freaking out driver.

"I'm, I'm sor..." Shizuka responds as she turns to look at me...

And silence, again. Well, other than the occasional horn beep from the headbutting driver...

"Serpflufier!" Shizuka exclaims as she pretty much forgets about the lamenting driver and skips towards me.

(Oh shit! Stranger danger!)

I quickly step aside, while leaving my leg and arm stretched out, causing Shizuka to trip, and fall on my arm.

"Awawawaa!" The moment she started to fall, she closed her eyes and started to widely flail her arms.

Without spending too much time holding her. Because, let's be real. That chest is way too friggin heavy. I lift Shizuka back up and 'stabilize' her next to me.

"Muuu! Why did you do that!" Shizuka whines with a pout. Bringing both hands over her chest as she leaned towards me.

"You'd have flattened me otherwise." I responded.

"Hey! I'm not that heavy!" Shizuka shouts as she frowns even more.

"God please tell me you don't have even MORE hot girls on your list!" The driver exclaimed as he turned to look at me through the jeep's window, the look of total defeat on his face.

"Uhh..." I respond by bringing up my hand, and start counting on my fingers, only to stop, and start counting again. The driver just lets out a very loud groan, retreats back into his jeep, and drives off...

"... Well, that was weird." I sigh as I fold my arms.

"When did you even get here?" I ask as I turn towards the school's nurse, who was staring at me with a wide smile.

"Umm, a little while ago, with a very big ship!" She responds as she spreads her arms.

"The others?" I ask again.

"Oh they are all here! They're talking with Saya and her Dad! Come on! They will be so happy to see you!" Shizuka exclaims again as

she grabs my arm and starts pulling me...

(Ohh yea, I'm sure they will. Especially Takashi and Re... Huh? Wait...)

"Wait, they are talking with Saya?" I ask.

"Mhm!" Shizuka nods excitedly.

"Then why are you so surprised to see me?" I ask again.

"Uhh, well. Just because!" Was what I got for an answer...

"Actually, why are you even here and not with the group in the first place?" I ask, yet again.

"Ohh, well. I.." Her cheery attitude quickly takes a nosedive as she stops walking.

"I thought I saw Rika, a friend of mine that was supposed to be stationed here. But, it turned out the person just looked like her, and by the time I caught up to them, I was lost..." She continues.

"Aaanyway! At least we found you three! Umm, Miss Busujima is still with you, right?" She asks as she turns to me with a rather forced smile.

"Yes, she's with her father right now. And, Rika 'is' here." I add as I tilt my head. Shizuka just keeps staring at me with a blank expression.

"Huh?" Was her response.

"I already met her actually. And I got to say, you got to teach her how to 'not' provocatively pick on people...." I add.

"R, rika is here?" Shizuka asks as she keeps staring at me.

"Uh, yea I just s..."

"Rika is here!" And my sentence got interrupted as Shizuka quickly hugged me and started jumping in place.

(Ohholishit!)

I quickly broke off from her hold by grabbing both her arms and removing them from my neck, then leaned my upper body back.

"Oi! Take it easy!" I shouted as I shook my head.

"But she's here! Rika's here! She's alive!" Shizuka just kept jumping in place like a little kid as she yelled happily.

"Yes, so let's calm down and exit the building in an orderly fashion." I responded. Shizuka, much to my surprise, stops jumping and tilts her head with a confused expression.

"... But, we're not in a building..." She responds.

(So she 'was' listening. Color me impressed.)

"Yes, but we really need to get going..." I add.

"Oh right! Come on!" Shizuka exclaims as she starts dragging me again...

(Uhh, didn't she just tell me that she was lost? Where the hell is she dragging me off to?..)

A happy, reunion

"Are you sure you know where you're going Shizuka?" I ask as I keep following an excessively happy school nurse.

"Of course~ The group is by the big ship with all the planes!~" She answers gingerly as she turns to glance at me with a wide smile...

Following her answer, I turned to look towards the aircraft carrier that was near the main airport field. Said carrier slowly moving across the sea...

"You know the 'big ship' has been slowly moving towards the right side of the airport for some time now, right?" I asked as I pointed behind us with my hand, then traced a line towards the carrier that was now adjacent to us. Shizuka glanced at the ship, then at me.

"It, has?..." She asks as she turns to look at the ship again.

"Yes." I respond flatly.

"O, ooohh! Then that explains why I didn't find anybody when I returned the first time!" She exclaims in surprise.

"I was so worried that they might have left me behind..." She adds as she drops her shoulders.

(... Knowing her, I bet she didn't even realize what sort of jab that was at me, seeing as they 'did' leave me behind...)

"Umm, Is something wrong?" Shizuka asks with an innocent, questioning look as she tilts her head.

"I'm just wondering how you didn't get lost in your own house..." I responded.

"Ahh? Well, uhh, heheh..." Shizuka fidgets about before scratching her cheek...

(Wait, she has? Uhh, I shouldn't be surprised should I?...)

"So, this way then?" I point behind me, and Shizuka nods.

-10 minutes later-

You know, I never realized how big this airport really is. Up until now that I had to walk it that is...

"Ah! There they are!" And Shizuka speaks up as she points ahead, towards a group of people in the distance.

She then started running towards said group as she waved her arm in the air.

"Hey~ Heeeeyyy!" She shouted as she kept running, causing the group to turn to her.

A group that consisted of Souichiro, his wife, and his daughter. And...

"Naier!" A chubby guy with a rifle, who shouted right after as he spotted me. I raised my arm in response as I kept walking.

The chubby guy, aka Khota breaks off from the group and trots up to me.

"You're alive!" He exclaims as he stops right next to me, Asami following behind him.

"Yea, partly thanks to the fact we found more info on more extraction points posted on the elementary school." I responded as I patted his shoulder.

"Man I knew you'd survive! But it's good to actually see you again!" He adds with a wide smile.

With that, we turn to head towards the rest of the group. And as we closed in...

"Mister overlo!..."

"Bark!" Yet before Alice could finish her sentence, Zeke jumped off her hands, and latched on to my sleeve. Waving his tail so fast to the point that he was almost swaying around as he hanged...

"... Uhh, breaking disguise again minion?" I sigh as I lift my arm, turning it to look at the small pup. Which just growled as it shifted its eye to look at me.

And then felt a sudden impact right under my chest. Turning to look down, I found Alice with her face essentially plastered on my shirt...

(Uhh, that's new...)

"My, are you going to turn evil now?" I ask as I pat Alice on the head.

"N,no! But, but... !" Alice answered with a muffled voice as she still had her face shoved against my shirt.

"Relax, after all, everything so far was all actually part of my plan." I respond as I glance towards Takashi, who just kept silent. I then lean slightly towards Alice, and put my hand next to my mouth, as to whisper a secret...

"Because in truth I had my minion here to keep an eye on you." I whisper as I shake the arm that had Zeke on. Said dog letting a disapproving growl because of the shaking. Alice lifts her head to look at me with almost puffy eyes.

(Jeez sports, don't start crying on me now.)

"Now, do take the minion before he ruins my cover." I chuckle as I tap Alice's head. She nods and turns at Zeke, who she effortlessly detached from my sleeve...

And then, I turn to Takashi again...

"Hey..." Was all he said to me as he motioned with his head.

"Hey..." Was all I responded with...

(... Uhh, ok me, be civil. At least as long as Saya's parents are here...)

The ones left were Rei, and her mother. Both of whom didn't even turn towards me. The reason?

"Thank you Souichiro. I mean it..." Her mother was speaking with Saya's Dad. And Rei was focused on the man himself as well, with a rather grim expression.

"Don't thank me yet Kiriko. We'll see if we can send a chopper over the location where he was last seen and hope for the best. You know he was also a friend of mine." Shouchiro continued.

(Huh, first name basis? Then again, some official images 'did' show Rei and Saya together, while wearing makeup, or dressing up, or something. Guess this verifies that the image was before the outbreak. And that their parents were at least acquaintances.)

"I'll do anything I can. Just please, the soonest we can send something, anything..." Rei adds as she lowers her head slightly.

"You don't have to tell me that Miyamoto. I will do what I can. Now, Kiriko, if you please come with me." Souichiro responds as he looks at Rei's mother. Then turns towards me.

"We have arranged rooms next to the ones you're already staying in. Would you show them to their rooms if you please." He adds. I just nod at him.

And with that, the grown-ups turn to leave. Leaving the rest of us to silently look at each other, for a few awkward minutes...

"Well no point staring at each other." I motion with my head as I turn to leave.

And after a few seconds of walking.

"Uhh, can we walk a bit, slower?" I hear a meek voice ask. I stop, and turn around...

"... why are you limping?" I ask as I look at Takashi and point at his leg.

"Ahh, well..." Takashi then glanced at Saya...

"I showed him exactly what I thought about his choice of leaving me behind." Saya huffed as she folded her arms.

(Wait, Saya's kicks can make people limp? I never found them to be that strong whenever she kicked me. Or she was actually holding herself back?...)

"Huh, I wonder what Saeko'll think of your choice..." I shrug slightly as I turn to look back at the road ahead.

"Actually, speaking of her. Where is she?" Takashi asks.

(Not losing a moment are you huh?...)

"Speaking with her father." I responded as I turned to glance behind Takashi to go wide-eyed. Rei also whispered something to herself, her expression seeming rather, spiteful...

"Her dad, is here?" Takashi asks right after.

(... Really dude?)

"No, he's in Canada, she flew over there for a small chat and hot tea." I answer with a sarcastic tone...

And after a few seconds of silence...

"Yes he's here Takashi." I add.

"I was just asking. You don't need to act so hostile..." Takashi responds.

"Hostile? Oh, I apologize, I mistook you for the guy that left me, Saya, and Saeko for dead. Personal opinion here, but I think you should be glad that ain't waving a flag that it was you that nearly got the daughters of two rather influential people here killed. So consider this to be my 'friendly' attitude." I respond as I turn to look at him, obvious sarcasm in my voice.

"P, please don't fight..." Shizuka then added with an almost whimpering tone...

(... And now Shizuka is going to guilt-trip me because I'm pissed at the guy that left me to rot? Uhhhhh, fun times ahead...)

"Look Nai.."

"How long will you keep acting like you were the only one that had to deal with hardships?" And Rei silently opens her mouth.

"Rei." Takashi quickly turns to look at her with a hushed tone.

"No. You're acting as we owe you for what happened. We don't owe you a thing, you're responsible for your own damn decisions." Rei retorts as she throws a glare at Takashi, then at me.

"Rei!" Takashi finally raises his voice as he then pulls Rei's arm.

(... Really? I was going to try to 'not' fly off the handle. But it seems you just want to turn this to a hundred anyway. So fine, let's turn this to a hundred.)

I stop walking, causing the group to also come to an abrupt stop...

"Look Naier she's jus..."

"Actually, now that I think about it. Takashi did 'not' nearly get me killed, your bitching did. Is that all you got to say to me? Rei?" I ask without turning around.

"You think you're the only one that had it bad?!" Rei shouts back.

"Rei that's enough!" Takashi shouts right after.

"Enough?! My father's gone Takashi! He's gone and if he's not dead, he's stranded somewhere in that hellhole!" She points towards the city as she screams.

"So why do I have to listen to his whining while at the same time I also have to deal with the fact that my father might be dead?!" She shouts.

I take a deep breath, and turn around. Quickly closing up to Rei.

"What? Are you going to hit m..."

"Listen up you stupid orange twat!" I loudly cut her off as I pointed my finger at her nose.

"You want to compare who has done fucking what here?! Fine! Take out a fucking notebook then!

Because **I** was the reason we managed to meet up again after your stupid ass jumped off the bus! **I** was the reason Takagi's house didn't burn to the ground! **I** was the reason Shido didn't manage to fuck us all sideways! **I** was the reason our Humvee was filled with supplies so you could munch on strawberrychikennuggets! And you can bet your sorry fucking ass! That **I** am the reason you're getting special treatment right now! Had **I** not cleared this fucking airport with another bunch of weirdos and taken a whole frigging cinema by myself! **YOU'D BE SITTING INSIDE A FUCKING TENT !** So don't go telling me about responsibilities when all you did was shake your tits at Takashi and throw me off a fucking cliff! Your father's stranded in the city?! Well I'm sorry to hear that! But you wanna know

something?! So was I! Thanks to you!"... After some point, I just stopped caring for the fact that half the camp had stopped whatever they were going and were just looking at me. As for the rest of the group, Saya, Kohta and Asami just stared at me wide-eyed, Takashi also kept staring at me while still holding Rei's hand. Rei herself was just glaring at me. And uhh, Alice and Shizuka looked like they were about to cry, Zeke was probably startled by the shouting as he was also frozen stiff...

"... Ohh boy, this must be the very first time I've heard you shout this much. But, I must digress. I'm not a weirdo thank you very much." And as if you just deflate the whole situation. A certain purple-haired sniper walked up to us.

Shizuka, who looked like a toddler who just got scolded for the very first time, turned towards the woman...

"R, Rikaaa!" She cried out as she quickly run-up to her and essentially solved her face into Rika's chest. I don't know if it was because she was surprised to see her, or because she got scared, or a mix of the two...

I took a deep breath as I kept looking at Rei, who was essentially glared back at me with her mouth zipped shut.

"So if you want to know. You do owe me. You owe me way more than you can ever repay. And, here's a free tip. If you want people to give a shit about your problems. Leave to give a damn about somebody who's not yourself. Rei." I hiss her name as I finish my sentence, and turn around to walk away. Only to stop and turn around again a few steps later.

"Your rooms are on the third floor before the top floor. Your keys have numbers, the doors have numbers. Do the math." I add before turning around again, this time actually walking away...

"Can I ask what happened here?..." I hear Rika ask...

(... Ugh, my neck hurts now, I barely shout, much less yell like this...)

I walked for about twenty seconds or so...

"Naier wait!" Until a female voice shouted from behind me.

(Now what..)

I stop and turn around to find Saya running after me.

"Yes?" I ask with a calm tone.

"Are, are you alright?" She asks as she looks at me with a worried expression.

"Uhhh, what sort of question is that?" I respond as I fold my arms.

"I, have never seen you react like that before. And I'm, I'm just..."
Saya glances around as she fiddles with her fingers.

"I'm fine. Rei just managed to use the wrong type of words at the wrong moment." I respond as I shrug.

"Now do stay with them, because I give them a sixty-present chance that they 'will' get lost..." I added as I motioned my head towards the group.

Who, other than Shizuka, who was still with her face stuffed in Rika's chest. Was looking toward us.

"O, ok.." Saya responded with a slight nod.

And with that, I turned to leave again, as Saya returned to 'our' group...

After that, I crossed the bridge and went back to the main building, then started going up the stairs.

(Uhh, I knew Rei was self-centered. But holy shit. I understand that she's distraught because her dad's gone. But she crossed one too many lines. Besides, if she can't bring herself to give a single fuck about others, why should others give a fuck about her? Because I really can't bring myself to feel sorry for her right now. I'm more worried about Hitomi rather than her.)

After reaching the floor with my room, I head straight to it and enter it...

"Ughh. Well me, this went as smoothly as a half-filled sack of potatoes rolling down a gravel road..." I groan as I let out a deep sigh and close my door. Then head towards the window.

"And I'm pretty sure I heard Souichiro say 'my group'. Which means he'll expect me to work with them..." I stop talking as I close my eyes.

"Much fun..." I groan as I lean against the window's stool.

"Well ok, to be fair. I got nothing against most of the group, plus Khota could be actually helpful here, especially if you consider that most if not all operations have armed personnel sent. So he'll fit right in. Until he has to run that is..." I take a deep breath as I open my eyes.

"Still, Rei's dad's gone? In the manga they never really managed to meet him, as the story came to a halt probably one or two chapters before that. But he 'was' at the evacuation center..." I scratch my chin as I sigh.

"Welp, not my problem. As I said, I'm not going to go out of my way to help her when she's acting like a tool." I sigh as I backstep towards my bed, sit on it, and then let myself fall back...

I then stayed like that, for, I don't know how long. But I must have drifted in and out of sleep a couple of times...

...

..

Until, the door knocked...

(... Uhhh? Did somebody just knock on my door?...)

And another knock...

(Yep, not hearing things.)

"It's open." I respond as I get to a sitting position, and end up looking towards the window once again.

"Hey Naier? Uhh, can we, talk?" A male voice asks. And from looking through the glass's reflection, I found the voice belonged to Takashi.

"I don't think we got a lot to say, but sure. Let's talk." I respond as I shrug, not bothering to turn around...

"Look I understand that you're mad both for what happened at the river and for what Rei just said. But remember that I offered to go down with the car first. And, Rei has been struggling to deal with the fact that her father might be shuffling in the city as one of them..." Takashi responds as he takes a few steps into my room, closing the door behind him.

(Nice set of excuses Takashi. So if I end up ripping her arm off and Pepsi'ing you with it. I'll just say that I warned you about it, and that I was distraught because my guinea pig died.)

"I just don't want our group to be at odds. We have to be able to work together without...."

Before Takashi could finish his sentence, I chuckled, and then, I started laughing as I lowered my head...

"Naier?..." Takashi asks as he tilts his head questionably. I took a deep breath and finally turned to look at him.

"I'm sorry to hear about Rei's dad, I really am. But 'we'? What makes you think I intend to follow you around again?" I respond as I stop laughing.

"Naier you said it yourself back then, there was no other choice, and Rei is just..."

"You missed the point Takashi. What I'm talking about right now has nothing to do with Rei. It has to do with you. And how you caved in under her. Let me put it plainly. What if we end up in a similar situation? How can I know that you won't cave in again and get somebody killed for real this time? Being a leader means you need to make decisions without letting your personal feelings get the better of you. And if you think that sounds fucked up. Well it is, being a group leader is 'not' a fun position." I cut Takashi off. Who just stayed quiet.

"We might work together, we might live next door, we might even share the same damn table, but I'm no longer part of your group. Don't take it personally, but I don't like the idea of having my life be dependent on a girl's mood swings." I add.

"Of course, I'm only speaking for myself here. If Saya and Saeko do want to return, I'm not going to stop them." I shrug as I finish speaking.

"You know very well that they will follow you, not me. Saeko and Saya already proved that by following you into that car. They won't return if you won't return as well..." Takashi answers.

(... Really? Hmm, I wonder now...)

"Is that why you want me back in the group so badly? Because Saya, and Saeko won't come along otherwise?" I ask as I fold my arms.

"W, what?! No! I!..." Takashi's eyes go wide as he stares at me, yet, does not finish his sentence. He just turned to look away...

(Hahhh, figured as much. The more you can't 'have' her, the more you want her huh?...)

"Look. I don't intend to burn down a bridge because of what happened. And I will come along if need be. But I won't be taking orders from you. Think of it as an independent mercenary tagging along. That's all I can offer you. If you want me to follow your orders, then prove that I trust your decisions." I say with a slight sigh.

Takashi keeps looking at me, before finally nodding.

"Fair enough." He answers.

"Or, you could just go straight to Saeko and talk to her. She's free to decide who she wants to follow around, I ain't her pimp." I add as I shrug.

"Uhhh. Now you're just messing with me..." Takashi responds with a slight sigh.

"Maybe I am" I shrug yet once more.

"Well, maybe I'll go." He shrugs back as he turns to leave.

(Have fun dealing with Silver Fang then. Though I don't think he will be very happy to find out that you nearly got his daughter killed. Or he'll count that as training too?...)

And with that, Takashi left my room...

I groan and let myself fall back on the bed again...

(... Do the problems ever fucking stop?...)

Wake up call

"..." I was on the top of a square three-story building that was made of wood and stone. Greenery surrounding the building for as far as the eye could see. A small yard around the building, followed by a one and a half meter tall wall, and a two-meter wide, and five-meter deep moat with concrete walls right after. Inside the moat, wheels embedded in the walls in a line, and on the rim of these wheels, a circular cap. Between the cap and the rim, several long, bloody blades extending like propellers.

"Seventh-day..." I whisper as I grip my sniper.

"Hope it'll be enough to hold them off..." I add as I glance towards the sun, which was slowly disappearing behind the mountains in the distance...

And, as the sun abandoned me and the night started to take over...

Shrieks. Loud shrieks echoed as the darkness of the night took over. A deep red fog slowly surrounding the building I was in...

"Why did I agree to this..." I tapped a button on a pole next to me, and with the crackling sound of electricity, several floodlights flared up around the house. Revealing that the house was now essentially surrounded. Surrounded by humanoid looking creatures, their eyes reflecting the light emitted from the floodlight, creating a sea of little, glistening gems...

Gems that, with another loud shriek, started to run straight towards the moat that surrounded the house...

"The batteries better hold..." I whisper as I press another button next to me, and the wheels in the moat start to rotate, causing the blades to start spinning...

And as the first group of creatures tried to enter the mote, they all got greeted by spinning metal...

Legs, hands, heads, all flying off in different directions. The wet sound of metal ripping through flesh echoing from all around...

I turn to glance behind me. A Blackhawk helicopter parked on the other side of the building.

"If all goes south, I can just bail. It'd be a shame to lose this place. But it's not worth dying over." And as I turned towards the carnage below, I spotted one of these things that somehow managed to pass over the moat and wall, and was now stumbling inside the house's yard. Both its arms were missing, yet it seemed to not even care about it as it just kept stumbling towards the staircase that led to me...

"How the fuck did you get in?" I groan as I lift my sniper and aim at the thing's snarling, lipless face. And with a single shot, send it plummeting down to the ground.

"Now stay out of m..."

-CRASH-

Before I could even finish my sentence, a loud noise echoed from the mote.

Turning to glance at it, I find that one of the wheel blades was now on fire, one of its blades bent towards the wall, creating a makeshift bridge over the death trap. A bridge that the creatures quickly used as they started to flood the house's yard.

"Oh fuck me!" I quickly get up and turn to run towards the helicopter.

It must have taken me less than ten seconds to reach it, yet, that time was enough for the things to reach the roof. Now screaming like madmen as they dashed towards me.

I quickly entered the Blackhawk while making sure the back doors were closed, then I started the engines.

I had barely managed to turn the ignition, when one of these things crashed headfirst on the glass part of the heli's door with a loud thud, creating a large crack at the point of impact. And then, more thuds as the helicopter started to slowly slide towards the edge.

"Leave my Blackbird alone you fucking asswhipes!" I shout as I pull a heavy pistol, aim with one hand at the glass door. And fire at the thing's head as it kept banging its head on it. The thing gets sent flying back, only to be replaced by another one a second later.

All the while the helicopter was still sliding towards a wiggling sea below me.

"God, just, Fly already!" I shout as I grab the flying stick with both hands.

Yet, the helicopter tilted to the left as one of its wheels went over the edge, making the whole helicopter slowly slide off the roof. And taking off almost horizontally.

"Shitshitshitshit!" The blackbird quickly picked up speed as it flew adjusted to the ground, quickly closing in towards it.

And as I tried to align the helicopter to face the direction it was flying off to, it went over the moat, and straight towards the unending horde...

"Fly like a normal helicopter Goddammit!" I shouted as the helicopter finally turned while reaching a point so low to the ground, that its blades started to rip the frontlines of the horde apart, causing the helicopter to quickly lose speed.

"Of for fucks sake!" I violently pulled the flight stick back, and went from staring at a sea of eyes. To a dark red sky as the helicopter started to fly backwards.

I then quickly push the stick forward. This time only enough to stabilize the giant metal bird as it started to finally get some height.

And not before long, I was away from the ground. Flying safely inside a dark red sky...

"God, this went south pretty fast..." I groan as I turn to look out the cracked window, the ground not even visible from where I was. Just a mixture of a red and black void...

"Hope the dipshits don't trample over my supercorn. It was a real pain to get, and I need the glue..." I add as I turn to look at the horizon again...

I then take a deep breath and...

"Huh? Uhhh, why am I smelling flowers?" I glance around me with a frown as I take another deep breath. But in the helicopter, it was only me, no flowers whatsoever...

"Weird..." I sigh as I turn to look ahead. And now, my seatbelt was starting to feel too tight. I pulled said seatbelt as I tried to keep flying, only for the seat belt to quickly snap back on me even tighter than before.

"The hell!?" The force of the belt shoved me back on my seat until my head touched the headrest, which felt oddly, soft...

"... The crap is this crap?" I groan as I keep flying, letting out a huge sigh as I close my eyes...

"Uhh whatever, as long as it keeps flying, I don't care..." I add as I slowly open my eyes...

"Just got to, find a place, to land..." I keep speaking as my eyelids slowly start to weigh down on me...

"I didn't refill her, before taking off..." And as I finish speaking, I close my eyes...

The sound of the spinning rotor and the engine slowly dissipating, to the point that they all but vanished...

...

..

By the next time I opened my eyes. I got greeted by a white ceiling...

(... Uhh, where's my blackbird? What's going on here? Did I bleed out or something?)

I groan as I turn my head to my right, and end up inches away from a... Black ribbon?

I slowly slid my head away from said ribbon, only to realize that my head was actually on a leg.

(... The fuck is going on here?...)

I followed the foreign object next to me, to find two arms around my waist, along with a head that was resting a little under my chest. A head with long purple hair...

A purple-haired head on my chest, a chest next to my head, and a leg under my head...

(... I'm not even gonna bother asking how Saeko ended up in my room. But how the fuck did she end up in a position like that?...)

I blink a couple of times as I turn to look at Saeko's sleeping face. Before looking back up the ceiling...

(Well, this explains the flowery smell...)

I then turn to look at her again, and poke her cheek.

"Oi..." I whisper.

No response, not even a moan...

"... You dead?" I 'ask' as I put my hand on her head and start ruffling her hair...

Saeko smiled slightly as she tightened her arms around me, grinding her cheek against me, before becoming motionless again.

"You know you'll be sore all over if you keep sleeping like that..." I chuckle and pass one hand under her head. And, as I get to a sitting position, I pass my other hand around her back. Right under her chest, then pull her in front of me. Ending with Saeko sleeping on my leg.

(She's really out cold huh?)

I pat her head as she shuffles about. Before she finally turned to face the ceiling, slowly opening her eyes...

"Good morning..." I whisper as I run my finger on her cheek. Saeko just kept staring at me absentmindedly with a half-asleep face...

I then turn to glance out of the window. The sky a dark shade of cyan...

"Or evening..." I whisper as I turn to look at my watch.

-6:30-

"Or really early in the morning..." I add as I turn to look at Saeko, who had by now closed her eyes again.

"Oi..." I poke her cheek again.

She just smiled and moaned softly as she turned to sleep on her side.

(And she's out cold again.)

I tilt my head as I place my hand on her head.

(Then again, I don't know when she popped up here. For all I know, she could have been asleep for an hour.)

I take a deep breath as I look at the 'rest' of Saeko...

(Huh, other than her boots. She's actually still fully dressed...)

I then glance at the rest of the room.

Her sword was placed against the chair next to the desk with the laptop. Her boots next to the exit door of my room.

(Well, I'm not complaining. Free Saeko on wake up is good.)

I chuckle under my breath as I turn my focus on the sleeping girl on my leg...

I silently run my hand over the spine, Saeko responds by softly moaning as she arches her back back, pushing her chest even more against my leg.

(... maybe I shouldn't have done that...)

I clean my throat as I place my hand on her shoulder...

(Focus... umm, I wonder if Takashi tried to speak to her. Not that I'm having any fears of her deciding to go full canon on me now. I mean, she 'is' sleeping on my leg right now...)

I put my fingers just over her ear and slide them behind it, moving any strands of hair away from her face and neck.

(You know, I just realized that she tends to curl up when she sleeps. And now, the urge to poke the sleeping samurai is re-rising at an alarming rate...)

I then slowly move her head off my leg, and finally get up.

(So, better I get up. Lest I get sued for assaulting a sleeping girl...)

With that thought, I head to the wardrobe, pick a new set of clothes, then to the bathroom to wash my face and change....

-Five minutes later-

I was leaning over the sink, looking at my reflection...

"Uhhh, look at you bub, waking up with one of the hottest hotd characters purring on your legs..." I chuckle, and then sigh...

"... Wonder if this thing with me and Saeko Saya will last though..." I sigh again as I look towards the closed door.

"Of course I'm not complaining about it. This is the best outcome I could have hoped for. But, this ain't mindless harem visual novel, both Saeko and Saya have their own thoughts. They can get bored, jealous, or decide that what I'm doing is unfair to them and demand that I make a choice. Or just plainly get up and leave if somebody else manages to fill up a gap that I can't..." I lower my head for a few seconds, before raising it to look at myself again.

"... Well, not much I can do about it. I'll do my best to keep them both happy. But if that won't be enough..." I spring myself away from the sink counter.

"I'll just let them move on. It's not like I have the right to get angry if that happens." I turn to look at the door as I fold my arms.

"... Huh, my brain really likes to torture me when it has time to wonder huh..." I shake my head as I take a deep breath.

"I mean come on now. Am I really thinking about this crap while waking up with Saeko all over me?" I groan as I walk towards the door...

(Plus, it's not like these two are that 'easy' to approach...)

And as I open the door, I find Saeko sitting on the bed. Motionless and staring out the window.

"Did I wake you up?" I ask as I walk up to the bed.

Saeko turns to look at me, a warm smile on her lips as she shakes her head...

(... And I suddenly feel stupid for even thinking about all that crap...)

I walk up next to her, then sit on the bed. Saeko, without speaking, slides a bit closer to me and leans herself on my arm, before resting her head on my shoulder.

"Ok, I have to ask." I speak up as I keep looking out the window.

"How did you end up sleeping with your legs under my head and your head on my chest?" I ask.

"Hmm..." Saeko shuffled about as she hummed silently.

She stayed quiet for a few seconds, before taking a deep breath.

"When I returned from my father. I found your door open." She speaks up.

"I wanted to just close your door, but..." She shifts her posture to turn her body towards me as she folded her legs.

"It was already late, and Saya was nowhere to be seen inside. So though, to spend some time with you..." She adds.

"And then you couldn't leave." I chuckle.

"I, apologize for sleeping on your bed with my clothes." She responds right after.

"It's fine." I answer back.

(Had I found you wrapped around me in your underwear, I'd have 'other' problems...)

"You're not sore?" I ask.

"Not really." She chuckles as she wraps both her arms around mine.

And, a few minutes passed in silence...

"Umm, if you don't mind me asking. I heard things got a bit heated between you, Takashi and Miyamoto." Until Saeko spoke up again.

"Uhh, kinda?" I responded.

"Hmm, how come? You seemed rather calm about the whole situation so far." She asks back.

"Uhh. I guess, I got ticked off at how nonchalant Takashi was about the whole thing. I know we agreed to this. But uhhh, I don't know. I suppose I half expected him to at least show 'some' regret for leaving us behind. Yet the first thing he asked me..." I turn my head slightly as I shift my sight towards Saeko's legs.

"Was where 'you' are at..." I add flatly.

"Hmm? So you got jealous?" She asks, a small smirk appearing on her lips.

"Uhh, let's call it, ticked off. Admitting that I got jealous over something like that while I'm double-timing, is uhh..." I stop mid-sentence as I glance away.

"Naier, both me and Saya agreed to this by our own free will. We, or at least, I am not forcing myself to do this. You don't have to feel guilty about anything..." She responds as she places her hand on my leg.

"Though I must admit. I do occasionally feel, Left out." She adds.

"And you seamlessly went from comforting me to guilt-tripping me." I chuckle.

"Well, I am just a girl, I do feel, jealous~" Saeko responds with a small giggle.

"And what about Miyamoto?" She adds right after.

"She managed to say the wrong things at the wrong time." I answer.

"Must have been quite the bad timing then. Since I was told that you really went at her." She retorts.

"Told?" I ask back.

"Yes, from Takashi." She answers.

(And he didn't miss a beat, did he?...)

"He also informed me that you don't intend to return to the group." She continues.

"Yea, not as a normal member at least. I will go along with them if need be. But not in a way where they'll be able to short straw me into jumping into another river." I answer.

"Why? Did he ask you to return?" I ask right after.

"No, he did not." Saeko answers flatly.

"... Do you want to return?" I asked again.

"Do I really have to answer such a foolish question? You can't get rid of me this easily, Naier." She chuckles.

"O yes, woe is me." I chuckle back as I put my hand on her leg.

Saeko puts her own hand on mine and rests her head on my shoulder again. Then turns to look out the window...

We stayed like that for some time, the dark sky outside slowly starting to brighten up...

"Hmm, want to go to the roof?" Saeko then asked without moving her head...

"Sure, why not." I answer as I glance towards her.

"Very well. In that case, give me a few minutes." She responds as she gets up. Then heads to the exit.

"Wait for me by the stairs?" She asks as she opens the door and turns to glance at me.

"Oh and, no mask~" She adds as she leaves my room with a giggle.

"... So the balaclava is ok?" I responded towards the now closed door.

And so, after a few seconds, I also get up and exit my room. Then head towards the staircase to wait for our purple-haired Samurai...

-5 minutes later-

I was sitting on the stairs, twiddling my thumbs. The hallway illuminated by the dim sky that was leaking through the windows.

"Wonder how many generators they'd need to power the whole building...." I whisper as I keep looking out the big window panes that overlooked the bridge that led to the airport. I then glanced towards the doors to my left.

"Other than me and Saeko, everybody else is probably still asleep huh..." I add as I take a deep breath, then look back out the window.

(Which would make it the perfect moment to keep true to my word and break into Saya's room...)

I chuckle as I shake my head.

(If I want to wake up naked in the middle of a corpse-infested road that is...)

"Sorry to keep you waiting." And just as I finished that thought, Saeko, who had silently exited her room, walked up to me.

"Don't mention it." I respond as I get up and turn to look at her.

She was wearing a black unzipped jacket that had two white lines running from the shoulder to the sleeves, a dark purple shoulderless shirt underneath. Tight-fitting black jeans that went all the way to the tall boots she always wore, minus the leg guards. Her hair up in a ponytail.

"Do I, look funny?" She asks as she slightly turns herself so I can see her from her sides.

"There was not a lot to choose from..." She adds as she turns to face me again.

"Uhh, you're really asking me about fashion sense right now? I'm the guy walking around with a balaclava, ski mask, and Kevlar helmet." I respond as I chuckle.

"And I think you must realize what I think about black by now." I add as I 'show' the clothes I was wearing.

" Yes, I suspected something." She giggled as she brought her hand to her lips.

"But, this must be the first time I see you wearing actual pants..." I added as I extended my hand towards her.

"Well, I do admit I find skirts easier to move around." She responds as she takes my hand.

"But as I said, not a lot to choose from." She adds.

And while holding Saeko's hand, we went up the three last floors, until we reached a metallic door at the end of the last staircase.

"You said this was unlocked right?" I ask as I grab the handle.

"Yes, just be aware, it gets a bit windy up here." Saeko responds with a nod.

And sure enough, the first thing that greeted me after opening the door, was a gust of cold wind...

(Oh sh... Uhh. Ok, I'm as awake as I can be now...)

Upon exiting to the roof I glanced around us.

"Huh, this place is as empty as it gets. Also, I feel I'll start sliding around with how smooth the floor looks." I keep looking around as we walk towards the center.

"Want to sit by the fence?" Saeko asks as she now completely wraps her arms around mine, essentially hugging it.

"Sure, why not." I nod as we turn to head towards the chest height chain link fence that surrounded the roof.

After reaching the side that overlooked the bridge and airport, I leaned slightly over the fence.

"Damn, that's high..." I whisper as I lean back, then proceed to sit down with the chain link to my back. Saeko sitting next to me seiza style.

"... Hmm..." I look up towards the sky as I narrow my eyes...

"This is officially our first date is it not?" I ask as I turn to her.

Saeko, much to my surprise, stares at me wide-eyed a few seconds as her cheeks started to flush...

"... What?" I ask as I tilt my head.

"N, nothing. I just didn't expect you to say something like that. You caught me off guard..." She responds as she glances away with a smile.

"Uhh, really?" I ask again as I fold my arms.

"... You, usually do not express yourself like that..." Saeko responds as she turns to look at me...

"Hmm, you are right. Which, gives me an idea." I answer as I make a one-sided smirk.

"Something on your mind?" She asks as she tilts her head.

"Yas." I nod as I put my hands on her shoulders, and turn her to the side.

"Wha, Ah!" Then push her down on my legs.

"... Ehehe~" She just giggled as she turned herself round to face the sky, then shuffled about a little bit to get comfortable, passing her ponytail over her shoulder and on her chest. She then folded her arms and bent her knees so her feet were actually touching the ground.

I leaned my back against the fence and turned to look at the dark sky.

We then stared at the sky in silence...

"Hey, Naier?" Saeko spoke up. I lower my head to look at her.

"Did you have, anybody you liked before, well. Us?" She asked.

"Not really. Which makes it all the more retarded that I somehow managed to get you and Saya to agree to this." I chuckle.

"Did you?" I ask back.

(Well I already know the answer to that. But whatever.)

"... Yes." She answers flatly.

"And to be honest, I am glad I never managed to convince myself to tell him so." She continues.

"Because, had he accepted me, and was I still with him today. This moment would have never happened..." She adds as her smile fades slightly.

"Well, you never know. You might have been happier." I respond as I shrug.

"Do not sell yourself short Naier. You really do not realize how much more, vibrant my life feels now that you are by my side..." She answers as she lifts her hand, placing it on my cheek.

"You sure you're not exaggerating a little bit? I mean, from my point of view, I didn't do 'that' much." I respond with a chuckle as I fondle her hair.

"Being there for me when I needed somebody to lean on. Being worried about my well-being. Putting your faith in me even after learning about a side of me that I am not so, proud of. Considering the circumstances we are in. I would say that I am not exaggerating at all." She answers as she smiles once again.

"Uhh, wait. When did you ever need somebody to lean on and I was there?" I ask as I tilt my head.

"... At the mall? Where I nearly chopped your head off? Where you insisted on trying to comfort me?" She responds as she keeps looking at me.

"Hmm. Uhh. Yeaaa, guess I'm just awesome then..." I chuckle as I turn to look towards the sky.

Saeko shuffles closer to me and nuzzles her nose against my shirt.

"More than you realize..." She whispers.

We then stayed quiet, the only sound being that of the wind, and the helicopters that echoed behind me...

And as time passed, the dim sky started to steadily take a brighter blue color, the sun slowly rising behind the vast dead city that sprawled ahead of me.

(And one more day survived huh?)

Just as I thought that, a single helicopter flew over me, and towards the deeper parts of the city.

(Still, all this noise. It's like asking for trouble...)

I then lowered my head to look back at Saeko, who was nonchalantly staring at the sky. She glanced back at me, smiled, and then turned to look back towards the now starless sky...

Wake up call pt2

"Hmmm, a man carrying a potted plant." Saeko speaks up as she keeps looking towards the sky, her head resting on my leg.

"Uhh..." I tilt my head while also looking towards the sky...

"Ten..." As Saeko starts counting.

"Aaaaaa." I narrow my eyes as I keep looking at the clouds in the sky...

"Five..." Saeko continues to count down.

"A decapitated pterodactyl's head." I answer as I snap my fingers...

"... Ohh?" Saeko lifts an eyebrow as she stops counting, focusing on the cloud.

"The part where you see the pot and plant is the blood splatter, the legs of the dude are the beak." I add as I point at the cloud.

"Well, you certainly have some imagination." Saeko chuckles right after.

"Very well. Your turn then?" She continues with a smile as she turns to look at me.

"Aight, so. Uhhhh..." I nod as I scan the clouds in the sky.

"To the right and down." I add as I point at the sky. Saeko nods a few seconds later.

"Hmmm, a dancing ghost, arms stretched, with a long flowing train." I continue.

"Train?" Saeko asks as she glances at me.

"The long back portion of a dress that drags along the ground is called like that." I answer as I turn to look at her.

"... Really? Well, now I am interested to know how you came to know that." She responds with a chuckle...

(... Uhh. Good question. Why do I know that?)

I shrug slightly as I lift my head to look at the sky again.

"Nice try, but you ain't buying free time like that Saeko. Ten." And I start counting...

"Sev..."

"A closed sack, ripped open at the center" Saeko cuts me off.

"..." I stare at the cloud as I frown slightly.

"I, guess. Yea ok." I nod as I fold my arms. Then, I lower my head and glance at the watch on my wrist.

"... Huh? Ten am already? We've been here for three and a half hours..." I add as I arch an eyebrow.

"You want to leave?" Saeko asks right after.

"Not really." I respond as I turn to look at her, then slide my fingers around the side of her neck.

Saeko closes her eyes as she smiles, tilting her head so my hand had more 'space' to move around her neck.

"But what are the chances people will be looking for me..." I whisper as I glance towards the door.

"Hmm. I must admit that you are quite in high demand. So pretty high?" Saeko answers as she opens one eye to look at me.

"Maybe I should have brought the radio with me." I answer with a slight shrug.

"Why did you not?" She asked as she opened both her eyes.

"Because it's a date with you. Not you and half the camp." I answer. Saeko just chuckles as she gets off my leg to sit next to me.

"How, thoughtful of you~" She answers with a small smirk as she leans her head over my shoulder.

"Would you rather have Saya yelling through the mic?" I 'ask' as I turn to look at her.

"Hmmm. No, I think this is almost perfect." She responds as she smiles, slightly tilting her head.

"Almost?" I ask again as I fold my arms.

"Well, there is one more thing I want right now. But I don't want to come off as rapacious..." Saeko responds as she keeps staring straight at my eyes.

"Uhh, I think we can let some extra greediness slide. As long as it doesn't involve you breaking my bones with a bokken..." I answer as I tilt my head. Saeko momentarily held back a chuckle in her throat, lowering her face and glancing away.

And after a few seconds...

"I, really can not even think anymore. What I would do without you." She whispers as she lifts her head again, this time bringing herself closer to my face, too close in fact. As her lips touched with mine.

My response was wrapping my arms around her and tightly hugging her. Though the fact that we were sitting next to each other made the whole situation a bit, uncomfortable.

After a few seconds, she pulls her head back just slightly, and touches her forehead against mine, closing her eyes as she lets out a small sigh.

"No pressure." I chuckle.

"You can always tell me to leave if you do not want such a responsibility." Saeko responds as she keeps her eyes closed.

"Hah. Yea, nice try Saeko but you ain't getting rid of me this easy." I answer as I run my hand along her side.

"Good." Saeko chuckles as she moves to nuzzle her nose against my neck.

-Sometime later-

Saeko was still slowly nudging her nose against the side of my neck...

"... I really need to get that radio. Because I don't see us moving from here..." I whisper as I glance around me.

"As much as I would like to stay like this. I agree. We do have responsibilities that we can not skim." Saeko adds as she finally detaches herself from me.

(... We can agree on the staying like this part...)

With that, we get up and slowly start to walk towards the exit door.

And just as we enter the building...

"Ah. Naier, wait a minute please." Saeko speaks up.

I stop and turn to look at her, only for her to walk up next to me and take my hand, interlocking her fingers with mine.

I glance at my hand, then at her. I then chuckle as I turn to walk down the stairs along with Saeko...

It took a couple of minutes before we reached the floor with our rooms. And as we got off the stairs and turned towards the hallway with our doors...

(... Oh, boy...)

A certain pinkette was outside my door, arms folded, tapping her foot with an annoyed frown. Dressed in her mall attire, along with the white jacket she wore after leaving Rika's house.

After a few seconds, she knocked on my door. Rather loudly at that too.

"Come ooon. Wake up already..." She groaned.

I glance at Saeko, who seemed to be holding back a smirk. And with a deep breath, I turn to walk towards Saya.

"Ughhh, that's why I need to have your keys you idiot..." Saya whispers again as she brings her hand to knock on my door again.

"I don't trust you with my keys Saya, you might steal ma mask and impersonate me." I speak up as I stop right next to her...

Saya lets out a small yelp as she lifts both her hands over her chest and jumps away, turning to face me mid-air.

And the moment she touched the ground and realized it was me who scared her. She opened her mouth to speak with an annoyed frown, yet her eyes trailed from my face, to my hand. Which was still holding Saeko's hand.

She closes her mouth and narrows her eyes as she folds her arms, staring at my face with a 'Ohh you little shit' look.

(... I have a really bad fe...)

"Thank you for the date Naier~ I had a wonderful time. I will be in my room if you need me." And Saeko speaks up as she finally lets go of my hand. Then slightly runs her fingers up my arm as she turns to leave...

(... And of course she would do that...)

Leaving me with a visibly annoyed pikette...

"Oh so you went on a date huuhhh?" And Saya finally speaks up, her voice leaking sarcasm.

"Yea, you want to go on one as well?" I ask as I tilt my head. Saya, just blinks at me a few times.

"We could go for a walk around the airport. Or do you want to go to the roof as well? Though that might seem cheap, since that's where Saeko wanted to go." I add as I fold my arms, turning to look towards the upper corner of the wall to my left.

Saya takes a deep breath, before letting an audible sigh.

"Really now idiot? Can't you at least show 'some' regret that you left me to dry?" She adds as she looks towards the ground and shakes her head, letting her arms hang.

"It was supposed to be 'my' day you know..." She continues as she lifts her head to look at me again with a, rather disapointed frown.

"And the Flying Spaghetti Monster really didn't make it easy for you. What with your dad calling you, then finding our group." I respond as I shrug.

"Uhhhh. The flying wha..."

"And then your apparent aversion towards sleeping in the same room with me." I cut her off.

"H, huh?.." Saya stops talking as she tilts her head in confusion.

"W, what are you talking about." She asks as she frowns even more.

"Well, you said it was your day. But Saeko told me that you probably slept in your room, since you were not in mine. So, she decided to just, let herself in mine. Thus when I woke up, I woke her up, and we ended up going to the roof." I respond.

"H,hey! It was late when I returned! Everybody was already asleep! So how could I know that captain retard here would leave his door unlocked for somebody to barge in?" She 'asks' as she folds her arms and an annoyed expression...

"Uhh, well. Yea ok you're right." I respond as I lift my hands.

"Hum..." Saya just huffs as she turns to glance away, seemingly a little less annoyed because I admitted that she was right and I was wrong.

"So. Since you're the one that got the wrong end of the stick. What if you are to decide what we will do for the rest of the day?" I ask as I tilt my head.

"Uhh, what?" Saya turns to look at me with a confused expression once again.

"What what? You, decide, what, we, do, all day. Wanna go swimming under the bridge and probably get in trouble? Done. Wanna throw rotten bananas at people? Also done. Wanna hijack a stealth blackbird helicopter and find a druglord's island to steal his booze? Easy. Wanna see me dancing in a skimpy cop suit. Yea I'm not doing that..." I glance away as I finish my sentence.

"So? What'll be boss?" I ask as I turn to look at her. But Saya didn't respond, she just kept staring at me. A deep blush on her face, her eyes slightly wide...

"... Please don't tell me you're imagining me in a skimpy cop suit now..." I sigh as I drop my shoulders.

"W,whwhahat! Of course I'm not! I'm not a pervert you pervert!" Saya essentially flails her arms around as she starts to shake her head, the blush becoming even deeper...

"And now everybody heard you shout that you're a pervert..." I add with a slight shrug.

"I said! I'm! Not!" She adds as she stomps her foot on the floor. And, just as she stops shouting, the door behind me opens. And out comes, a sleepy Shizuka, looking as out of it as humanly possible. Hair a mess, clothes a mess, her eyes still half-closed. Holding her pillow with one hand. At least, she was actually dressed this time around...

"Ahh, Shizuka. Sor.." Yet, before Saya could finish her sentence. Shizuka turns towards Saya, and starts to unsteadily trot up to her, passing by me without even acknowledging my existence. And, then she stops right in front of Saya...

"Uhhh, Shizuk..."

-Grope-

Shizuka casually lifts her hand. And gets a handful of Saya's chest. Causing the pinkette to let out a small surprised yelp. She then pulls her hand back, before bringing it to Saya's shoulder. Then she starts tapping around until she reached Saya's flushed cheek...

"Hummm..." And Shizuka, with a soft moan, then brought her hand on the top of Saya's head. Before, raising it slightly...

"W,what are y..."

-Bonk!-

And then brought it down on Saya's head...

"Ow! What are y..."

-Bonk!-

And another bonk on Saya's head...

Saya slightly bent her knees as she brought both her hands over her head at a loss, looking up at Shizuka who just looked, like Shizuka...

And, as a few seconds of silence passed...

"Huuuuu. Crappy alarm, I want to sleep mooore..." She moaned as she turned to walk straight back into her room, closing the door behind her...

(Well, that just happened...)

"..." After Shizuka left the hallway, I turned to stare at Saya in silence.

"..." And Saya just kept looking at me, hands on head, knees still slightly bent.

"Khh..." I bring my knuckles to my mouth as try to stop myself from laughing.

Saya pouts slightly as she quickly trots up to me, only to throw a quick kick to my shin...

"Pfftughhh. Uaaahhh, that, actually hurt..." I chuckle under my breath as I do a few hops back with one leg.

"I'm surrounded by friggin idiots..." Saya grumbles as she folds her arms and turns to look away.

"Join us- or be- annihilateeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeed." I respond as I try to sound like a robot. Saya just shakes her head as she glances at me for a split second.

"It's you that should be joining me idiot, not the other way around." She huffs.

"No can do, you lack tranquilizer darts and kibble." I respond as I also fold my arms.

"Kibble? Were you not a robot a few seconds ago you dolt? Why would you need kibble?" She asks as she turns to look at me.

"I'm a Tek Rex." I casually answer.

"Rex? The best you could probably do is a Dodo..." Saya smirks.

"Dodorex." I respond flatly.

"What?" Saya asks with a slightly confused frown.

"Or Dodowyvern. Better Dodowyvern, sleeker, can fly, can barf three elements. Also can fly." I add.

"What the hell are you talking about? And you said fly twice." Saya asks again.

"I know, it's just that damn important, flyers are real crutch mounts." I answer as I stare at her with a serious expression.

Saya just kept staring back at me with an eyebrow arched...

"Did that kick rattle your brain or something?" She asks as she makes an annoyed frown.

"Who knows..." I answer nonchalantly as I move my head from left to right...

"Sooo, we gonna stand here for much longer or..." I continue.

"Hum, think for yourself. I'm still mad at you. And I expect you to make it up to me..." She responds as she once again looks away with a huff.

"Suit yourself." I answer as I turn to head to my door. Once in front of it, I unlock it and open it...

"H,hey. You, you're not going to leave me here are you?" Saya asks as she turns to stare at me, her face actually looking kinda worried...

(... Jeez Saya, if you can't handle the punishment, then don't do the crime.)

"Though never even crossed my mind, but I can't open my door when my hands are full." I respond as I turn to walk up to her.

"Ahh? But your hands are not **fuuu** !" And before she could finish, I pick her off the ground, princess style.

"W, what are you doing?!." She whines loudly, though she does not try to move, or resist.

"Since you don't wanna walk." I shrug as I walk into my room with her in my arms.

"I can walk you idiot..." Saya grumbles as she looks away from me, not that she sounded all that displeased though.

"Too late for that now I recon..." I chuckle. Saya, just kept quiet.

I close my door with my leg, and walk up to my bed, towards the side that looked the window. Then, I sit on the bed and lean my back against the bed's headrest, with my legs still off the bed. Saya still motionless and now essentially on top of me.

"So, what now princess?" I ask as I ruffle her hair.

"D, don't call me that you stupid..." She whines as she grabs my shirt with one hand, keeping her face lowered as she takes her shoes off her feet in order to pull her legs up, she then takes her glasses off and leaves them on the nightstand next to the bed.

"Ok then. What'd be capitan?" I answer with a slight chuckle.

"Idiot..." She responds with a whispering whine.

"... udl.." She adds with an even weaker whisper.

(Da-ja-vu)

"Noodle?" I ask back.

"Hmm, I think I saw a noodle shop on my way back, I could propably..." And before I could finish speaking, Saya threw a quick jab at my side.

"You know very well what I said you nitwit..." She pouts as she keeps jabbing my side, albeit very lightly...

"Did I? I mean, I'm just a dump dodo after all." I respond as I run my hand along her back.

"Stupid..." She whined again...

After a few seconds of silence, I finally took off my boots. Which was much harder than it needed to be, what with Saya not wanting to get off me.

Also another thing I noticed. Was that Saya was looking rather...

"Why so grim?" I ask.

"It's, nothing..." Saya responds as she keeps looking away.

"Saya. You sound as convincing as a junkie begging for a buck to fill his bicycle with gas so he can enter the metro because he's hungry." I respond as I pat her head. Saya lifts her head to look at me with a perplexed expression, before frowning slightly.

"Uhhh, it's just." She sighs as she lowers her head and places her cheek against my chest.

Yet remains silent...

"It's nothing, it's stupid..." She whispers.

"So you're going to say a stupid thing to a stupid guy. Matches pretty well I'd say." I answer as I wrap my arms around her.

"I, I just had a bad dream ok?..." She answers with a cranky tone.

"Must have been pretty bad if you're still thinking about it..." I respond as I tighten my arms around her. Saya just turned to stare at the wall.

"You, don't know how it feels..." She whispers as she keeps looking away.

"Saeko, is always out there with you. She can be near you, she can try to protect you if something happens..." She continues as she lifts her head to look at me again.

"I can't do anything. I'm just sitting here like a rock, wishing that that 'something' doesn't happen. Because all I'll be able to do then is hope that I won't have to watch you die..." Her eyes were slowly starting started to puff up as she spoke.

(Wait, her nightmare was me getting killed?)

"Saya. You know that what you do is not 'just' sitting around right? Ever played a video game? You should know how important a minimap is." I respond as I ruffle her hair.

"It's not the same. I still won't be able to do anything if something happens. And, Saeko will at least get the choice to die with you if that moment comes. While I'll have to somehow chalk it up and move on by myself..." She answers as she lowers her head.

(Ok, that's actually a bit too dark...)

"So you want to come out as well?" I ask. Saya stayed quiet for a few seconds...

"I know I'm just going to cause problems, I'm not cut out for that. You asked me what bothered me. I told you. I was not expecting a

solution..." Saya answers as she places her cheek on my chest again, this time while still looking away from me...

(... I want to tell her that I won't die. But she knows as much I, that would just be empty words with how things are now..)

So instead of speaking, I just kept stroking her back...

"I know that this outbreak is the only reason we are this close..." She whispers as she half closes her eyes.

"But I want my normal life back. I want to worry about stupid stuff, like what color nail polish I should buy, or what time I would go out to the shops. Not if one day I'll wake up all alone, with everybody around me dead..." Saya tightens her grip on my shirt as she closes her eyes.

"Well, I'll admit I don't have a good answer for all of this..." I respond as I poke her cheek.

"But..." I add as I take a deep breath.

"I can at least do this~" I add as I quickly bring my hands to her sides and squeeze.

"H,hii! S,stop! I, it not the t, time for that nyiaaahahaha!" Saya quickly starts squirming on me as she tries to stop my hands, to no avail...

I didn't respond, I just kept 'poking' the moody pinkette. And honestly, with how she was sounding right now, I was half expecting somebody to barge into my room with the reasoning of sexual harassment...

It must have taken a few seconds before Saya decided to try and retaliate, not that she could do much now, as I already had her in a corner, or so to speak...

"I, I give! Staaahaha! I give up!" Saya exclaims as she tries to curl up on me.

(Well, at least you're n...)

Yet the moment I let up, Saya quickly retaliates by jabbing my sides...

(OI YOU CHEEKY FAK!)

I quickly grab her hands, and force her off me, before climbing on top of her, holding her hands against the bed.

"H,hey! No fair! You're bigger than me!" She whines as she tries to break free, to no avail.

"That's what you get for snek attacking." I answer as I raise an eyebrow.

"You started it." Saya grumbles as she pouts at me.

"Hey, better to have you annoyed than to have you depressed." I respond with a slight shrug.

"And this is the only way you thought you could take my mind off things? Stupid..." Saya mumbles as she glances away.

"Hmm? Got any other idea?" I ask as I bring my face closer to hers.

"Stupid..." She whines as she throws me a quick glance before looking away again.

I lower my head a bit more, to the point that my nose touched her cheek. And, just as Saya started to slowly turn her face...

" Saya ." The radio in her jacket's pocket goes live...

" *Saya, this is your father.* " The radio continues...

(... Really now? Again?...)

" Saya ." The radio speaks up again...

"... Mmmmuuuuuuaaaaaaaa!" And Saya, with what sounded like a whiny pout, shout? Starts slamming her feet on the bed, essentially throwing a tantrum under me...

"Oh come on! Again?!" She exhales loudly as she lets out a sigh, ending up with a very pronounced pout on her face...

"I'm starting to think that your dad really has cameras in here..." I bring my hand to the back of my neck as I let go of her hands and sit on straight while still on top of her.

Saya, with an expression that I can only name as disappointment. Picks the radio from her pocket.

"Yes, papa?" She asks as she turns to glance away from me.

" *Saya, I need you to gather your whole group. We have an update on the matter concerning Miyamoto's father. I need the whole group present at my office on the third floor.* " The radio answers.

"Right now? Most of them are still asleep..." Saya responds.

(... Uhhh. Did I just get cockblocked by Rei's might be dead dad?...)

" *Yes, wake them up. This operation's going under their name. So they need to all be present. Inform me when you'll be ready...* " Shouchiro retorts.

"... Yes papa." And Saya responds with a sigh under her breath.

And then, silence...

(Waitaminit. Whole group operation? Written under our name? Oh I don't like this...)

"Welp, guess we better..." I start to move to get off Saya as speak, only for her to grab my shirt with one hand.

"Uhhh..." I glance at her hand, then at her.

"In, in a bit..." She whispers as she glances away.

"He didn't say we need to be there right now, so, ten minutes won't matter..." She adds, though I get the feeling it was herself she was trying to convince...

"Saya. Are you skimping on work?" I 'ask' as I lean over her with a smirk.

"S, shut up, stupid." She whines back as she keeps looking away.

I then silently lower myself, until my nose grazed her neck. Causing Saya to tense up as she caught her breath. Until she wrapped her arms around me...

"... You're heavy..." She whispers right after...

(Jeez Saya.)

I chuckle as I move to lie next to her, passing one arm under her and pushing her against me as she turned to face me.

Without speaking, Saya nuzzled her face against my shoulder as she wrapped her legs around one of mine.

"And any chance of getting up in 'ten minutes' just disappeared." I whisper with a chuckle.

"I'm not weak-willed. I can get up if I want to..." Saya retorts, while she was essentially clawed on me...

"Hmm, really?" I start to tilt my upper body back as I speak, only to get a soft disapproving groan from Saya, who tightened her arms, and legs around me.

"Yes." She mumbles with a muffled tone as she presses her face against my chest.

"It sounds like somebody's embarrassed." I respond as I ruffle her hair.

"I'm not..." Saya retorts, her face still shoved against my chest.

"Really? Shame, cute and shy usually makes for a smashing combination." I answer as I raise an eyebrow. Saya just raises her head to look at me with puffed cheeks as she sulks at me.

I pull back one of my arms back, then bring my hand under her chin, and lightly scratch it.

"I'm not a cat stupid." Saya huffs, without really trying to stop me.

"Really? Because you seem this close to start purring." I answer as I smirk slightly.

"S, shut up." She mumbles back as she glances away without moving her face. And while she was looking away, I took the chance to shut her up instead by locking her lips. An action that Saya didn't take too long to respond to, as she started pushing her face against me...

We, must have stayed like that for a few minutes. Until Saya, actually backed off.

"Ohh? So you can actually hold yourself back?" I ask as I tilt my head.

"Hum, I told you I'm not weak-willed." Saya retorts with a heavy blush on her face.

"Really, so I guess you can resist everything." I chuckle as I slide my hand under her shirt and to the top of her back, before bringing it down as I lightly scratch her back.

"H,heaa s, staaahaa. Y, you're not being fair." Saya whines as she keeps staring at me, pushing her upper body forward, or in other words, pushing her chest even more against me.

"But you're strong-willed, this is nothing. Right?" I ask as I raise an eyebrow, giving her side a slight squeeze.

"I'm, really going to, bite you if you don't stop." She mumbles as she takes a few short breaths between her sentence.

"Hmm, well if you are being so serious to the point that you'll start to nom-nom, then I can only yield." I answer as I pull my arm from under her shirt, then lift myself to sit on the bed.

(Nom nom? Really me?)

Saya just kept staring at me while lying on the bed.

"What's with that stare? Where you maybe, hoping that I would continue instead?" I ask as I lean towards her with a smirk.

"S,shut up, doffus..." Saya quickly also gets to a sitting position and starts fixing her clothes. I just chuckle back at her.

Yet instead of getting up, she just stared at the covers with an absent-minded look.

"Something wrong?" I ask.

"Uhh, no. Nothing." Saya shakes her head and gets off the bed and starts wearing her shoes. I shrug slightly as I also get up and start wearing my boots.

Once we were done, we start heading towards the door, only for Saya to stop right in front of it.

"Saya?" I ask as I stop next to her.

"Umm. Can we, do this again later?..." She asks as she glances at me, then looks away again.

"Why are you asking me? I told you, you get to decide what we do with our free time today." I respond as I fold my arms.

"Or you think that I don't actually like doing this~?" I add as I ran my fingers along her spine.

"H,hey!" Saya wiggles her upper body as she turns to face me with a pouty face.

"Hum! You're right. I get to decide what we do. So you can't say no matter what I ask." She responds as she folds her arms, narrowing her eyes as she leaned towards me.

"Indeed, but who knows what I'll do tomorrow if you make me do something, weird." I answer as I also lean towards her.

"I, I'm not a pervert like you." Saya retorts as she glances away.

"That's exactly what a pervert would say." I chuckle as I open the door, Saya throwing a quick jab at me as retaliation.

And so, we got out of my room.

"So, how do we wake everybody up?..." I ask.

"I, don't know. Knock on their doors?" Saya essentially asks back.

"Alright. I'm not knocking on Shizuka's door though..." I respond as I point at her door.

"Why, you're scared?" Saya asks with a haughty smile.

"Fine, just don't blame me if she thinks I'm a pillow and drags me into the room or something..." I answer as I turn to her...

"... I'll wake up Shizuka." Saya retorts almost instantly.

"I'll go get Saeko then, she can help us wake up the rest." I add as I start to walk.

And with that, I head to Saeko's door, and knock on it.

Several seconds later, the door opens, Saeko behind it with her hair down, wearing her usual short skirt and stocking, along with the dark purple shirt she wore earlier, though it now looked more, black than purple. Probably because the jacket she wore before was actually pitch black, which made the shirt stand out.

"Naier? Can I help you?" She asks as she tilts her head.

"Yea, Saya's d..."

"H, HEY! WAI!" And a surprised shriek/squeal cuts me off. Turning to the voice, I find a pair of pink twintails disappearing inside Shizuka's room, the door to said room closing behind them...

"Uhhh." And I just kept staring at the hallway.

"Naier?" Saeko asks again as she leans her head out of the door to look where I was looking.

"And Saya just became the first casualty of what we need to do." I respond flatly.

"Excuse me?" Saeko asks back with a confused expression.

"Her father called. They want the whole team at his office. Something about Miyamoto's father." I continue.

"Oh. But I thought you said you were not part of that team anymore." Saeko responds as she straightens her posture, a small smirk on her lips.

"Yea, he didn't get the memo from the looks of it. Let's just go and see." I answer as I shrug. Saeko just nods and turns to walk into her room. She then takes her school shirt, which was on a neatly made bed, and wears it over the purple shirt.

"Uhh, wasn't that shirt ripped?" I ask as I tilt my head.

"I sewed in a new button." Saeko answers casually as she ties a black ribbon over her chest.

"Alright, I'll go wake up Kohta then. And I guess Asami." I respond.

"I will get Rei and Takashi." Saeko nods at me...

I nod back, and turn to walk away. Only to stop a few feet later...

"Uhh. Where is..."

"Furthest room ahead" Saeko cuts me off with a small giggle.

"Thanks." I wave without looking at her and start walking again. And upon reaching the furthest door, I knocked on it. Then wait for a few seconds...

(Fat chance they'll wake up from one knock.)

I start knocking a second time, only for the door to actually open mid-knock. Asami behind the door, in her underwear...

"Do you always open your door dressed like that?" I ask as I fold my arms. Asami just kept staring at me with a sleepy expression, and after blinking a couple of times, and probably processing what I just said, she looked down. And without making a sound, she slammed the door shut...

(I'm surprised she opened it so fast. Is that a cop thing?)

A few minutes later, the door finally opened again, this time both Kohta and Asami showing up.

"Uhh, g, good morning. Sorry you had to see Asami like that." Asami makes a slight bow as she speaks, Kohta just looked like he was still asleep, while standing upright...

"Don't mention it. Once you and Kohta are set, we are to go to Saya's dad. They have something to say about Miyamoto's father." I respond. Asami nods at me, and turns towards Kohta as I turn to leave.

Saeko was already talking to Takashi outside of their room, Rei next to him with her eyes wide open.

-five minutes later-

We were in front of Shizuka's room. Since the two people inside were the only ones that were still 'missing'.

"You said Saya went to get her?" Takashi asked.

"Yes, but it looks like Shizuka got her instead." I respond.

"Uhh, you want me to knock again?" He asks.

I just shrug...

Takshi nods, and turn towards the door.

"Hey! Shizuka! Saya! Are you alright in there?" He shouts as he knocks loudly on the door.

"Uhh. Noth... Oh wait, the knob is turning..." He then takes a few steps back as he speaks, and the door finally opens...

Saya appearing behind it, holding the door with one hand, slightly hunched over and looking like she was shoved in the same room with a very angry Honeybadger. Shizuka sitting on her bed with her eyes closed and a wide smile.

"A, are you alright?" Asami asks as she keeps staring at Saya.

"I'm never, waking up Shizuka up, ever again..." Saya grumbles as she exits the room, and heads straight towards her room...

-ten minutes later-

We were finally all by the stairs, Shizuka and Saya included...

"Did your father tell you what he found?" And Takashi asked what was everybody probably thinking.

"No, so we better get going." Saya responds as she starts going down the stairs, the rest following behind her shortly after...

(... Uhh feels weird to walk with the whole group again...)

Several minutes later, and without anybody saying a thing, we reached the door to Souichiro's office on the third floor. Saya then knocked on the door before opening it.

Inside, behind a wide desk filled with files and papers, sat Souichiro. His wife standing next to him...

Along with Saeko's father and Rei's mother, both of who were also sitting around the desk...

(... Why is Silver fang here?)

The room itself had a big window to the left, and behind the desk, several tall, metal filing drawers. Some of em half-open.

"You're here." Souichiro lifts his head to glance at us before looking back down at a file in front of him.

"Saya told us you had some new info concerning Rei's father." Takashi responds. Souichiro just nods plainly.

"Yes. Based on what the survivors in the school said. Tadashi and a few more people were to go on a run to find a more steady supply of food for the survivors in the school. By checking a grain storage facility relatively near to the school." Souichiro keeps looking at his papers as he speaks.

"And this is actually good leverage for us. The carrier might have brought equipment and a build-in water purifier. But it also brought a lot of starving survivors, and nothing in terms of food. This was actually the reason they docked here in the first place. Which essentially means that our food supplies are dwindling, fast." He continues.

"Now as I mentioned. That place is relatively near the school. And the school is to the west of here. The grain facility, is supposed to be even further west from the school. And by the general's words. Too far to spare resources for." He adds as he lifts his head to look at us.

"So they won't do anything?!" Rei asks loudly as she leans forward towards Saya's dad.

"No. They will give us a helicopter. But, we will, in turn, have to give them half of whatever resources we find or mark there." Souchiro answers.

"Half? For a chopper? That guy should be renamed to Scalpimus Maximus...." I whisper as I fold my arms.

"Pfft..." And a muffled chortle right next to me.

Glancing to my left I find Saya with her hand over her mouth...

"And. If we find nothing, or the amount of resources outweighs the resources needed to get it. Then he'll use your group for a single operation instead." Shouchiro adds flatly.

"Wait what?!" Saya blurts out at the same time as me.

"A trade, or so to speak." Souichiro responds.

"So the fact I cleared a stinking cinema counts for nothing?" I ask as I fold my arms. Causing Rei's mother to turn towards me.

"Not exactly, it was the reason we managed to get actual rooms instead of getting stuffed into tents like the rest of the refugees." She

answers.

(... Oh wooptiti fucking doo. So you get rewarded for my work. And now I might also have to run missions for captain Ntr because of this. Uhh, at least 'some' parts of the team deserve the nice treatment...)

"And now that I think of it, I had yet to thank you for it." She adds as gets off her chair and makes a deep bow.

"Right now I have nothing but my gratitude to offer you. But once I am able, I will return the favor." She continues. I just nod back.

(Uhh, at least her mother does not have her head stuck up her ass.)

"When do we leave?" Khota asks right after.

"As soon as you're ready. Decide who will go and who will stay. The helicopter will have another team in, which means we can send only a team of three. " He adds as he folds his arms.

(Ohh so not only he walks half of our stuff, be he also gives us a helicopter that will be on another missions? The fuck.)

"Also tell us what equipment you will need. Radios, guns, ammo." His wife continues.

"G,guns?..." Khota whispers right after as his eyes go wide...

"Very well." I nod and turn towards Takashi, who also turns towards me after realizing I was looking at him.

"It's your rescue mission. You decide who goes." I add as I fold my arms.

"But what I told you still stands." I continue.

"I understand. And well, I'm going." Takashi nods.

"I want to come along as well." Khoda adds.

"I'm going too. It's my father we're looking for after all." Rei speaks up right after.

"So it'll be us three then." Takashi nods...

(So the team looking for the guy is his daughter, her boyfriend, a guy that does not like to run? Am I the only one seeing how bad of a combination that is?)

"Very well. In that case...." Shouchiro nods, and turns to look at me.

(... And I suddenly have a very bad feeling about this...)

"Naier I would like you to join the team that is going with them." He adds.

(... Aaaaa Blargcopters!...)

"I know you just returned. But this is not going to be hard. You will just stay in the helicopter and act as support fire." He adds.

(... Salvageable blargcopters...)

"The sniper in that group did specifically ask for you. Something about making her life easier on last operation she went with you." He adds...

And as if it was not obvious enough...

"Hummmm. Rika likes snipers..." Shizuka adds while in deep thought, finger over her mouth...

(... And now somebody is glaring at me...)

"So I'll just sit and shoot?..." I ask.

"Yes." Shouchiro responds flatly.

"Whaaa..." And with an almost whimpering tone, Khota opens his mouth to stare at me.

"Looks like you volunteered for the wrong job bud." I chuckle as I turn towards Khota. Who just let his shoulders drop with a long sigh.

"Just for future reference. Khota is a better shot than me." I add as I turn to Souchiro.

"You can inform them of that yourself. You will be on the same helicopter after all." Souchiro answers.

(True. But I really don't like the idea of switching places and ending alone with Takashi and Rei. But, Khota is too passive if conflict between them arises, Takashi can end up simping under Rei's pressure. And Rei can go mental if she finds her dad's corpse walking around...)

And as I was about to start another fight with Rei.

"Actually. I think my daughter should stay behind." Rei's mother speaks up.

(Huh, so I'm not the only one that 'does' think that this is a bad idea...)

"What?!" And Rei's eyes go wide.

"Why?! My father is..."

"Your father, is my husband. And that's exactly why you will not go." Her mother cuts her off.

"Would you let Takashi join along if you were looking for his lost, stranded mother?" She continues.

(... We're going to have a second showdown now? Also, was that a secret side jab towards Takashi because he let Rei come along?...)

Rei, much to my surprise, just lowers her head...

(Huh, well color me surprised. Guess that's mom power for you.)

And after a few seconds of silence.

"Asami will go in her place..." Asami speaks up.

"Can I ask something in that case?" I add as I turn to the short cop girl.

"Asami, if Khota stays in the heli. Will you still go with Takashi?" I ask.

"Uhh, well. Asami, she..." She turns to look at Khota, then at me, then at Khota again...

"She will do what she needs to." She answers as she turns to me.

"While Asami would prefer to stay by Khota's side, she knows she will be dead weight if she stayed in the helicopter with the others, she is not a very good shot, and never used any bigger gun compared to her standard-issue handgun." She adds.

(... Well, at least she understands.)

"Very well then." I add as I nod.

Shouichiro then turns to his daughter.

"You will head to the comms tower again?" He asks.

"Yes." Saya answers flatly.

"And we will need new microphones." She adds as she glances at me.

"Here, make me a list of what all of you need." Saya's mother leaves a piece of paper and a pen on the desk. Saya nods, walks up to the

table, and takes the paper and pen.

"We have some other matters to attend to, so once you're done. Tell your mother via the radio." Souchiro adds as he gets off his chair.

"Alright Papa." Saya nods, turns to glance at me, then starts to walk toward the exit of the room.

(So. Essentially Rika just dumped work on me. Great...)

Flyby

"A sniper huh?..." Igano scratches his chin as he purses his lips. A small amount of grease painting his cheek.

"Yea, I'll be on helicopter support soon. So I could use a weapon that can shoot straight after a ten-meter distance." I nod as I glance around the tent, the buzz of the people working on equipment ever so loud. Equipment that honestly varied from weapons, to actual machinery.

"Huh. I thought this tent was meant for weapon maintenance." I motion with my head at what seemed to be a stripped-down engine in the corner of the room, a couple of mechanics doing, 'something' on it.

"Oh? Nahh. Mechanics in overall use this tent. As most hardware tools are placed here." Igano shrugs as he also looks at the engine.

"But, back to your question." He adds as he turns to me.

"We don't have any snipers you could use. Not military-grade ones at least. We do have a couple of X-bolts's. But uhhh. I think it would be better if I just give you a barrel extension for your Scar-H." Igano folds his arms as he tilts his head.

"And a better scope." I add as I nod.

"Sure thing. Give me the gun for a bit, I'll hook the parts on for you. Oh and the mags, or you refilled em yourself?" Igano extends his arm towards me as he motions towards an empty table a few meters behind him.

"Just don't break it." I jokingly respond as I hand him my Scar-H and mags. Igano just chuckles.

"Well, I won't be keeping you. Seems you got people in, high places waiting for you." He adds as he leans to the side to glance behind me...

I tilt my head before also turning to look behind me, only to find a certain pikette waiting next to the tent's exit, arms folded and looking towards me.

(Hmm? Saya?)

I arch an eyebrow as I turn around to walk towards her. Saya quickly turning to look away when she realized I was coming.

And the moment I got close.

"Are the others set?" I ask as I stop in front of her.

"Yea." Saya nods.

"So, here..." She adds as she hands me a military-grade radio. You know, the ones with the very long, flexible antenna.

"Huh, we went from earbuds to flipper-sized Nokias." I chuckle as I put the radio in my vest's chest pocket, half of it still sticking out. Then I bend the antenna and shove its top into the same pocket.

"You'll be going too far for the earbuds to reach you. I've already set the frequency, so don't go pressing any buttons like an idiot. Also, these radios are not push to talk. They're constantly open. So don't go off saying any stupid stuff either..." Saya retorts as she folds her arms.

(I would make a joke now. But, she does seem worried. I mean, she did have actual nightmares about this stuff. So, let's not be 'too' insensitive now.)

"Don't worry, I'll be back before you know it." I respond as I pet her head. Saya mumbled something as she glanced away, but did not try to stop me.

"Hope I'm not interrupting anything." And a male voice speaks up from behind me, Saya quickly leaning away from my hand the moment she heard the voice...

Turning to look over my head, I find Igano with my gun.

"Your girl's ready to go." He chuckles as he shows me the Scar-H. A new, longer barrel attached to the front, along with a longer, bigger, actual sniper scope.

Now, I don't know if it was because of how Igano called it, but Saya turned to stare at the gun with a slight frown as I took it and passed its sling over my shoulder.

(... Don't tell me she'll start acting jealous because Igano called my Scar a 'she'...)

"If you are ready, we should get going. You need to be by the landing pad before the helicopter arrives." Saya calmly speaks up as she turns to leave the tent.

"To think I'd live to see the day where the boss's daughter would let somebody pat her head. Hell must have frozen over..." Igano whispers as he turns to stare towards Saya, then gives me the mags.

"No frozen hells needed, just the end of the world." I respond as I chuckle, turning to leave right after.

And so, I exited the tent to find Saya waiting for me a few meters down. After she saw me, she nodded and turned to walk again, her destination, the airport.

I then quickened my pace to catch up to her.

"Do you think Rei's dad is still alive?" And the moment I got next to her, She spoke up.

"No idea. But, he was a cop right?" I ask.

"Detective." Saya corrects me.

"So he should have some training at defending himself, and as a detective, he should also be able to think under pressure. On the other hand, he was gone for some time now, and all it takes is a bite..." I continue.

"Just, be careful ok?" Saya responds as she glances at me.

"Don't worry, I got every intention to return." I say lean slightly towards her.

"And continue from where we left off~" I whisper as I poke at her side.

"N, not here you idiot!" Saya quickly wiggles away from me as she throws a few quick slaps at my hand, then lifts her head to look at me with puffed cheeks. I just chuckle as I put my hands in my jacket's pocket.

"Stupid, now everybody is looking at us..." She mumbled as she kept walking with her arms folded.

"They're probably jealous." I shrug as I keep walking.

"Hum, at least you understand how lucky you are..." She adds with a huff.

(On that, I can't disagree...)

And so, we passed the bridge and went into the airport. Then, we went towards the left. Towards what I think were helipads, judging from how there were several docked helicopters scattered about. And in the distance. A group of people.

(Hmm, I see a set of purple hair. Saeko and Rika are already over there. And a chubby guy with a short girl next to him, Khota and Asami? No wait, there is another stocky dude there, but he is dressed in military gear. And Takashi, and a guy with a sniper in

military gear, and one guy with a medic armband also in military gear. And, one guy that looks like a casual grunt, in military gear...)

And as we closed in...

"Oh come on Saeko~ At least give me a chance, I swear you won't regret it~" The stocky dude was speaking with Saeko.

(... Really now?...)

"It is 'Busujima' for you." Saeko calmly responds with her arms folded.

"And, you just got burned." I speak up as we close in, the group turning to look at me.

"Hmm? Oh, Naier's here, we're all here?" Takashi asks right after.

"Yea, I think so." Rika responds.

"Naier? So that's the masked guy's name?" The stocky guy asks as he turns to glance at me with an arched eyebrow.

"Yes." Saeko responds calmly.

"Hmmm? Oh! So you must have been the cute voice he was talking with then!" The stocky dude exclaims as he points at Saeko.

(Wait, cute voice? Talking? When did. Ohhhhh. Wait, don't tell me this guy is the machine gun dude from the last time I was on a helicopter run with Rika. Was, he always that short?)

"Saeko was not the one using the radios, I was." Saya, who was a few steps behinds me walks up next to me and speaks up.

And...

-Whistle-

"Hot damn~" The stocky dude whistles as he eyes Saya from top to bottom.

(... Oh great, he's that type of guy...)

"Ugh, creep..." Saya just groaned as she rolled her eyes with a dissatisfied look, slightly moving to 'hide' behind me as she tugged my sleeve.

"Oi now, that's just mean..." The stocky dude laughs.

(Not really in the mood to deal with this...)

"Well commando, glad you could join us." Rika waves at me with a friendly tone as she smiles.

"I'm not late am I?" I ask.

"No, the helicopter is not here yet." Takashi responds.

I then turn to glance at Kohta and Asami.

Asami just waved at me, while Kohta was, avoiding to look at me?

(Huh? What's up with Khota?)

"Hey Khota." I speak up as I fold my arms.

"H, hey..." Khota glanced at me before looking away again.

"... Uhh, did I miss something here?" I ask as I tilt my head.

"He thinks you are mad at him." Saeko responds casually, causing Khota to snap his face towards her, wide-eyed.

"... Uhh. Whut?" I frown as I tilt my head even more.

"W, well you know, from yesterday..." Khota mumbled.

(... He means when I went ballistic at Rei? Oh come on, he can't be that meek to think I was actually going off at the whole group. Right?...)

"I'm not mad at anybody, Rei included. Shit happened, now it's over." I respond.

"Uhh, well..." Khota, just kept mumbling.

"But hey, if you don't want to come over to my room once electricity is back for some video games then I ain't gonna force you." I add as I shrug. The words, video games instantly making Khota lock his face at me.

"V, video games?" He asked as he kept staring at me, his voice slightly cracking at the end.

"... And nerd number one baited nerd number two successfully..." Saya groans as she rolls her eyes.

"That makes you nerd number three then?" I ask as I turn to glance at her from over my shoulder, causing her to slightly push me as she puffed her cheeks with a slight blush.

"Can I be nerd number four then?" Saeko speaks up right after as she smiles while tilting her head. Causing almost half of the group to turn towards her.

"I don't want to feel left out." She chuckles as she puts her hand over her lips, then walks up next to me.

"Oh, oh! Make me number five then!" The stocky dude raises his hand right after, starting to also walk towards me.

"Sorry, max party number is four." I replied flatly, the stocky dude letting out a disheartened 'awwwwhh'

"Hmm? Oh, I think our ride is here." Rika then speaks up as she kept looking towards the sky in the distance. A helicopter seemingly

making a beeline towards us.

"Well then. I should get going in that case. Try not to lose your radio this time." Saya throws me a quick smirk as she turns to leave.

"I guess I should go as well." Saeko adds right after, and right as she finishes, she leans towards me and touches her forehead on the side of my forehead, sliding her fingers under my balaclava and to my neck.

"I'll wait for you to return." She whispers before she also turns to leave. Leaving, well. Everybody to stare at me.

"... I want to buy your life." The stocky dude blurted out with a serious expression.

"Best I can sell you is uncracked pistachios." I respond as I fold my arms.

"Man, that's cold. Sharing is caring." The stocky dude chuckles.

"That type of sharing, makes want to rip somebody's nervous system and knit them a sweater with it." I answer as I narrow my eyes.

"Ohh, ughh. That just made my elbow nerves hurt..." The stocky guy responds as he grimaces, massaging both his elbows with his hands.

(Hurt? Gooood. Oh wait, we're not in Murika...)

"By the way Naier..." And my radio goes live.

"Ohh! The cute voice is here!" The stocky dude chuckles.

(... He bounced back fast...)

"I'm going to take my laptop to my room." Saya responds.

"Uhhh, why?" I ask back.

"Because if electricity returns, you'll fill it with stupid games." Saya answers flatly.

(Oh you know me so well.)

"You just want it to play sims in private don't you." I chuckle as I look at the helicopter that Rika pointed at some time ago, now clearly heading towards us.

"N, no I don't! I need it for important stuff!" Saya yells through the radio.

"Like playing sims in private." I answer with a slight shrug. Saya just lets out an audible groan.

"Or you're using that as an excuse to make me break into your room at night?" I ask again with a slight smirk.

"W, what are you saying you ultimate buffoon!" Saya yelps back.

(..Ultimate buffoon? What's next? Mega Retardmon? Heh. You know it's rather funny how her insults just keep flying over my head...)

I hold myself back from chuckling. For about two seconds. Before finally, I let out a dry laugh.

"You two sure get along." Rika, who was standing next to me leans slightly towards the radio.

"Better than the first time we met." I answer with a shrug.

And, after a few minutes of silence, the Blackhawk helicopter finally landed in front of our group.

"Alright people, let's move!" The sniper guy started walking first towards the helicopter as he shouted.

"I'm calling gibs on the machinegun!" The stocky dude shouts as he quickly moved to follow after the sniper.

(And that seals the deal, this guy is the machinegun dude...)

One by one, we all got on the helicopter, with me sitting by the left door on the first row of four seats, Rika sitting next to me the medic after her, followed by the stocky/aka machinegun dude, Takashi ahead of me, next to Khota and Asami, followed by the sniper. With the generic dude sitting on one of the two remaining seats that were back to back with the seats that Takashi and the others took. In front of the generic dude, several boxes filled with ammo, and then, the cockpit

(Well, here we go again.)

I turn to glance outside as I leaned on my seat.

"Alright people, we'll be heading towards the cinema first as they asked for support, then, that grain silo." The pilot speaks up, and the helicopter starts to take off.

We all stayed relatively quiet for some time, Untill...

"Hey, comando. Want to have another match~?" Rika asks as she puts her hand on my shoulder and leans on me to look outside as well.

"You two seem close. You knew each other before the outbreak?" Takashi tilts his head as he looks at me and Rika.

"Hmm? Nope, we actually just met a couple of days ago." Rika answers casually.

"Speaking of it, that's Takashi, the group leader of the group I was with, next to him is Kohta, and after him is Asami." I motion towards them with my head as I start speaking.

"And on a side note, Khota is actually a dead shot, he's much better than me." I add, Rika instantly raising an eyebrow.

"Ohh? Really." She asks as she then leans towards Khota, causing the cleavage of her open suit to become even more visible towards the chubby guy, whose eyes, started to trail...

"Uhh, aahh, n, no. I mean yes, I mean. I'm, Ok..." Khota mumbles, Asami glancing at Kohta, then at Rika, then at where Khota was staring. Then, she looks at her own chest. And lets out a dejected sigh...

"Khota, you are making your girlfriend depressed." I speak up as I fold my arms. Khota darts his head to me and blinks a couple of times, before snapping out of whatever fantasy he was in.

"Ahh! Oh! S, sorry!" He quickly turns towards Asami as he apologizes.

"... If only Asami was bigger. Life is not fair..." She mumbles.

"Hmm speaking of girlfriend. I'm actually impressed to see that certain two girls are actually having a civil conversation between them. You must be, really good at what you do." Rika smirks as she turns to me, causing Takashi to turn and stare at me even harder than before. Practically, I think he could see the wall behind me with how hard he was drilling holes in me.

"I got no idea what you're talking about." I shrug. Rika just chuckles again.

"Hmm, so Khota right? If you don't mind me calling you that." Rika then turns towards Khota, who quickly shakes his head.

"If commando says that you're a better shot than him, then I 'have' to try you out~" She adds as she leans towards him again.

"T, try me out?..." Khota asks with a squeaky voice, his eyes trailing down again...

"Rika please don't be so suggestive to our resident gun nut. He's still too pure." I chuckle as I keep looking out the open door.

"Hmm? So you're telling me you're not pure?" Rika smirks as she glances at me.

"Does this look pure to you?" I ask as I turn to her and point at my face, or well, mask.

"No idea, maybe under that mask you have an innocent, pinchable baby face." Rika laughs back.

"You should know that innocent-looking faces are far worse than faces that scream 'be aware I'm up to no good'. If they have twisted intentions I mean." I respond as I let out a dry laugh through my nose. All the while, Takashi was staring at me and Rika with his mouth zipped tight...

"I don't mean to cut your little merry party, but we are closing into the cinema, and I'm seeing a lot of movement. Get your guns ready people!" The pilot shouts. Distant gunshots becoming louder by the second.

(Huh, well that was fast, coming by boat took almost three times the time...)

And soon after, we flew over the cinema, constant gunfire echoing from below, the road in front of the cinema block off by several rows of barricades on both sides, with enough space between to fit a couple of trucks. Corpses pushing up against both sides. With the side that was to our front, which led further away from the airport, having visibly a lot more corpses, both next to the barricade, and incoming towards that said barricade.

"This is Hawk six. Did somebody ask for air support?" The pilot speaks through his radio with a slight smirk on his face.

"Oh am I glad to see you guys!" The heli radio responds.

"Tell us where you need us." The pilot retorts.

"Our left! Too many for us to handle! If all these fuckers reach the barricade they'll get past it in no time! No way I'm losing this place when two damn kids managed to take it over by themselves." The radio responds.

(Huh, looks like I'm famous. Heh...)

"Roger that." The pilot nods and starts moving the Blackhawk again. The sniper dude and the machinegun dude readying their guns and quickly opening fire the moment the corpses came into view.

"Hmm, by the way, Khota." Rika glances at the chubby guy again.

"This Ar-10. Is mine, right?" She asks she leans towards the gun.

"Uhh well..." Kohta fidgets about as he looks away.

"I mean, it has the same modification. And mine, should also have a nudge. Right, Here..." She points at a small cut on the outside of the changing handle as she leans even more towards the chubby guy.

"Ahh, well, you know. It's, because..." Khota just kept glancing around, his voice losing volume to the point that he probably just kept speaking in his head.

"Hmm, tell you what. Impress me now, and I'll let you keep it." She smiles as she leans back. Khota's eyes instantly flaring up.

"Really?!" He shouts excitedly as he darts his head towards the dark-skinned sniper.

"Don't get too excited though. I'm really hard to please~." Rika chuckle as folds her arms. Khota, didn't seem to even realize the innuendo this time though, as he was almost drooling over what might soon become his gun for real.

"Takashi!" He then darts his head towards the shotgun tooting hero.

"I need your seat!" Khota exclaims as he points at Takashi's seat.

"Uhh, Ok..." Takashi nods slightly and starts to get up.

"Hold on to something, lest you go skydiving into a horde without a parachute." I speak up as I point outside.

"Yea, you're right. Thanks." Takashi stops moving, only to grab the top of his seat as he got up, Kohta quickly passing under Tkashi's arm.

(Why are you thanking me? Common knowledge is common. Uhh, great. Now I'm being a dick in my head for no reason ..)

" Alright. Let's see..." Khota then looks outside as his face turns serious.

"Well, this might be interesting." Rika puts her arm on my shoulder and leans on me as she keeps staring at Khota.

"All I need to do is keep them away from the barricades. So first I need to draw them away, then I can pick them off." Khota whispers as he looks through his scope.

"Maybe shoot a car gas tank? Hmm, still might not actually blow it up though..." And Khota keeps mumbling.

"Do we have any more ammo types here?" Khota asks as he looks away from the scope.

"Here." The generic dude from the other side slides a metal box, under Khota's seat.

"Sweet! Thanks!" He exclaims as he takes one mag from his vest.

"Takashi! Please change the ammo in this to incendiary!" Khota shoves the mag on a confused Takashi.

"Uhh, which..."

"The ones with the Blue tip!" Khota cuts him off...

(I'm starting to wonder who's the boss between the two right now...)

All the while, on the other side of the heli...

"Ahahahaha! Eat led motherfuuu,uuuooww, biut my liup..." The stocky dude shouts. The sniper just glanced at the guy and shook his head, then turned back to shooting.

"Rikkaaa, I did a boubou, can you kiss it away?" He adds as he turns to stare at Rika with a dramatically sad expression.

"You want me to change your diaper too?" Rika chuckles, causing a couple of people, along with the stocky guy, to start laughing.

"Ohhh kink..."

-KA-BOOM-

And a loud explosion shuts the stocky guy up.

"Ha! I knew I could do it!" Khota shouts as he lifts his head from the scope, staring at an SUV that was up in flames relatively near to us.

"Ohh? How did you manage that?" Rika asks as she turns to look at the burning car, the nearby corpses slowly surrounding it.

"I shot the tank a couple of times, then switched to indecency and shot the pool of fuel that was created underneath it." Kohta responds as he switches magazines. Then looks through his scope again.

(Well looks likes I won't be doing anything this time around. Hmmm, and now I'm bored. Being bored makes me do stupid stuff. So, let's do something stupid.)

"Hey Saya." I turn towards my radio.

"Hmm?" The radio responds.

"I'm bored. Tell me a joke." I answer with a lazy voice.

"... *What...*" Was all I got for a response.

"I, am bored. I want you, to tell me a joke." I say once again.

"Ugh. What are you saying you idiot. Stay focused, you..." Saya loudly grumbles back.

"Joke. Or no cuddles for you." I answer with a serious tone. Causing Saya to start choking. And Takashi to glance at me with a weird expression, before he turned to focus back on loading bullets in the mags Khota kept shoving at his face. The rest, were too busy shooting stuff. Otherwise, I bet that mister stocky on the other side would have something to say. Well, ok Rika was staring at me with a smirk, but I guess I should be thankful she didn't actually speak...

And after a few seconds of loud coughing...

"W, what are you saying you dolt?!" She shouts.

"I'm haggling for jokes?" I answer again with a flat tone as I look out the open door. Khota by now being completely in the zone and almost rapid-firing his Ar-10.

"Then haggle using something else you idiot! W, what if somebody hears you..." Saya responds this time with a calmer, almost whiny tone.

"... So what you want to tell me is. That you feel the need to hide me from other people? My hart..." I answered with a dramatic sigh.

"I, didn't say that. I just don't want others to stick their noses in my private life..." Saya answers with a calm tone.

(Ohh? An actual answer that makes sense instead of yelling and calling me names? Saya, I is impressed.)

"Hmm, point. Which means I'm probably not getting my joke..." I sigh.

"Humf. That's not my problem." Saya huffs with a pleased tone.

(She really likes coming on top huh? Uhhh, that came out wrong...)

And so, I kept looking outside, Kohta essentially taking care of the whole left side of the heli by himself, while Takashi was acting like his reload boy.

-Sometime later-

"You were not kidding commando. The kid is pretty good..." Rika, who was leaning over my shoulder chimes.

"So you gonna ask for him from now on and leave me to rot in piece?" I ask back.

"Ehh, he has yet to blow up an airport. Though I must admit his reactions are more entertaining than yours." She chuckles as leans back on her seat. Khota paying absolutely no attention to us...

"Damn guys. If I knew you'd be this efficient I'd have called you earlier. You saved our guns." The pilot's radio speaks up.

(Huh? Saved your guns ehh? Guess them Tyranoids are really hard to hit...)

With that, I lean back on my seat and casually stare outside, towards the sprawling city.

(Makes me wonder how the other cities are handling this. Considering the army here seems to be handling this place 'ok'. Yet again, in a place like say America, where even the squirrels are packing, things could spiral out of control, very fast. Just think about it, a Shido, with guns. Ughhh. Yet on the flip side, a corrupt individual in power here could cause much more damage...)

"Enjoy it while you can. We have a long-distance ahead of us. We can't keep this bird stationary in the air for too long with how much fuel it burns." The pilot responds...

-Some more time later-

(... I'm, bored...)

"... My fingers hurt..." Takashi whispers as he keeps reloading the empty magazines Khota was pretty much tossing towards him by now.

"Ahahahah! Who's your daddy biatch!" And the stocky dude on the other side was also, in his own world, the sniper silently taking pot shots next to him.

The medic was also as silently looking outside, while Rika was...

"I'm boooored..." Whining as she kept leaning on me in order to look outside.

(... You don't say...)

"Hey, think of something fun to do." She adds with a lazy expression as she shakes my shoulder.

"If I had something fun to do I would not be as bored as you." I respond as I kept looking outside...

(Hmm, the roads are littered with burnt corpses, also wrecked cars. Khota really went ham...)

"Hey pilot. How much more genocide till we move on?" I ask as I turn to look towards the cockpit.

"I'd say a couple of minutes. But since you asked..." The pilot picks the radio next to him.

"This is hawk six. We'll move on now. Hope that was enough for you." He adds.

" Roger that Hawk six. We'll take it from here, next beer is on us. Alright you ballerinas! Back to positions! Break time is over! " The radio responds. And the helicopter, start to finally move.

(Damn, that guy is as loud as fucking ever. But hey, a guy who shares his drink can't be 'that' bad right?...)

"Uhh? Ahh? We, are moving?" Khota, who was silent up until now finally takes his eyes off the scope.

"Yes, time's up." I respond.

"Ohh. Uhh so, umm..." He turns to glance at Rika, then away from her.

"How did I do?" He asks.

"You got me bored." Rika answers flatly with a serious expression. Khota lowered his head in defeat.

"You could have at least made 'some' mistakes to keep things interesting." She chuckle right after, causing Khota to sigh in confusion as he lifted his head to look at the purple-haired sniper.

"Well, just don't come to me if they ask you for the gun's paperwork. Or if it's legal for you to have it. Though considering our circumstances I don't think you'll have to worry about either. Just take care of it ok? It was a real pain in the ass to ship in Japan. Also, it was my first gun." She adds with a slight shrug. Khota's eyes instantly widened as Rika stopped speaking.

"Y, yes!" He responds with an excited nod, hugging the rifle.

"Good for you bud, just, turn the safety on please." I add as I glance at him, Khota letting out a low-toned 'ah' as he turned the gun's safety on.

And after a few minutes of silence, and the occasional giggle coming from Khota as he kept poking his Ar-10...

"So, where are we going to now?" The medic asks.

"Central landmass, about halfway past its middle point." The pilot answers.

"That far? Can't they just send some people from a nearby outpost then? Why send a heli from the other side of town?..." The generic dude groans.

(You didn't know how far it was? Though that was what debriefing was for, or did you sleep through it?)

"We're the only ones with any actual air support to spare." The pilot responds flatly.

"And the nearest outpost to that location is still too far away to go by land." He adds.

"Speaking of it. How will we move about?" The sniper asks.

"What do you mean?" Takashi responds.

"We have two different objectives from what I've been told. Search and rescue, and checking the grain silos." The sniper answers.

"Well, checking the silos should not be too hard. These things should have a hatch at the top right? I can just drop one of you on it." The pilot adds right after.

"Let's just hope they ain't locked then." I shrug.

"Ehh, just let me go then. No measly lock can stop these babies~" The stocky dude chuckles as he flexes his arms. His suit swelling from the mass underneath.

"What, you'll punch the lock open?" Rika laughs.

"Ah? Baby, you don't know how many locked doors these bad boys have opened." The stocky dude responds as he turns towards Rika, wagging his eyebrows with a smirk.

"Damn dude, you sound like a total fukcboi right now..." I sigh as I glance at him.

"You know you're just jealous of them biceps." The stocky dude laughs as his smirks turns towards me.

"Not really..." I shrug as I look outside. The landscape slowly moving in front of me.

"Totaly a response of a guy who's jealous." The stocky dude laughs back once again.

(... I could really rub it in his face that I'm the one with two sexy girlfriends. But that statement will be used against me in so many ways, so that I'd rather not...)

-Yet again sometime later-

We had long since passed into the central landmass, the helicopter quickly flying towards its new destination.

(... You know. I really wonder how many times would we have gotten close to getting chomped on if we had to do this distance by foot. Heh, flyers, are indeed crutch mounts. Not that I'm complaining mind you.)

We had passed a residential district and a business district so far. We had also gone over the elementary school that Rei's father was supposed to be stationed at. All that happened quite some time ago. In other words.

"Time to wake up people. I see the facility." The pilot speaks up.

"Ohh? Finally~ I was about to fall asleep." Rika lets out a yawn as she stretches.

"Hmm, the place seems pretty big. I see at least two rows of silo tubes. Sets of threes" The pilot continues.

"No, wait. I see six more behind the main building." He adds.

"Twelve total? Damn, if these things are full, then the new menu will become boring as fuck." The generic dude whistles.

"I'd rather have boring food than no food." The stocky dude adds right after.

"A rare moment that I actually agree with you." The sniper chuckles as he turns to look at the stocky dude.

"So? How do we do this?" The medic asks as the helicopter flew over the main building.

And as the pilot said, a 'sixpack' of grain silos towering from both sides of an already tall building. Machinery and shiny pipes sticking out of said building and leading towards the tube sets.

(Hmm...)

I lift my scar and use the scope to take a better look around the building.

Sadly, with electricity out, the insides of the building, if viewed from the windows, looked pitch black. But considering that corpses had already spread on the roof and the surrounding scaffoldings. It's safe to say the insides were 'not' safe...

"I see a lot of scaffolding to move around. But let's not bite off too much. I can leave one person on each set of silos. They can check them while we do another run of the building, get a closer look for any signs of survivors." The pilot glances at us before turning to look back out.

"Alright. I'm a man of my word. So I'm taking one set. Ima bust them locks." The stocky dude nods.

"I'll take the second one then." The generic dude adds.

"You guys don't have to, this is something we have to do." Takashi speaks up right after.

"Ehh, where here now so fuck it. I'm bored of sitting on my ass anyway." The stocky dude chuckles.

"Alright then. I'm going to close in to drop one of you on the nearby silo set." The pilot nods.

And just as the pilot started to turn the heli.

(Huh?)

"Wait!" I shout as I raise my hand.

"What's up commando? Saw something?" Rika asks as she leans to look outside as well.

"Other side of the main building, next to the distant silo set. Small building, about one room size. A small bridge linking it with the main building." I point with my free hand as I speak, before grabbing my scar with both hands again.

"Hmm?" Rika tilts her head and looks through her scope. Khota following right after.

"Yea, I see it. the one that has diagonal supports attached to the silos right? With that giant balcony surrounding it. " Rika nods as she speaks.

"Yes. Look at the grouped-up corpses lying in front of the door. Not the ones strolling about around on the balcony, just the 'dead' ones. " I add as I also nod.

"Uhh, what about them." She asks as she tilts her head.

"They are not dressed like factory workers." Khota speaks up.

"Exactly. And they have rather big bags on them. So unless people liked to go camping on silo factories before the outbreak..." I add as I stop looking through the scope.

"People from the group that came with Rei's dad!?" Takashi exclaims.

"Or random scavengers. The thing is, they're all next to that door. So 'something' inside that door drew them there. And something, dropped em." I add as I glance towards the distant structure.

"So somebody might be alive in there!" Asami loudly speaks up. I just nod.

"Alright then, I'll leave one of you here, we'll then go straight to that spot, then the final silo." The pilot adds as he glanced at us, before turning to fly the heli towards the nearby silo pack.

"I would go first. But I'll go on the second, just in case you people need saving in between." The stocky dude makes a thumbs up towards us.

"Saya, we just reached the silo factory, storage, or whatever the crap it is." I speak up.

" *Ok..* ." Saya respond with the most lazy-ass tone I could possibly imagine.

(Damn she sounds like she's about to fall asleep on the mic, no wonder she's been silent...)

And so, the moment the Blackhawk stopped a little over the first silo pack, the generic dude disembarked, or more like jumped off. After that, the pilot quickly moved the helicopter towards the other side of the building, since the longer it stayed over that silo pack, the more corpses it would draw towards that unlucky sob that was on it.

"I don't see any place to land. The balcony is too small for the bird." The pilot speaks up as we close into the small building.

"The railing on the far left. It's broken, can you just get the helicopter on the same height as the floor? We can get off normally then." Takashi speaks up as he keeps looking out the heli.

"Hmm, alright, should be manageable." The pilot nods, and as so, he flew the helicopter to the side of the balcony, and then slowly started to descend.

"By the w..."

"Surprise bitches!" And before the pilot could speak. The stocky dude shouted, and opened fire, mowing down the corpses that were on the balcony with his machine gun.

"Never mind..." The pilot sighs.

"Well you three, I think this is your part." I speak up as I look at Khota, Asami, and Takashi.

"Yea." Takashi nods as he gets up. And as he turns to leave.

"Hey. Did you get a radio? Don't think shouting us information from down there will work" I ask.

"Uhh..." Takashi just glanced around.

(Unprepared as fuck you are...)

"Here." Rika then tosses him a radio.

"It's tuned to the heli's frequency." She adds.

"I see. Thanks." Takashi nods slightly and exits the heli, Khota and Asami following behind right after. The helicopter gaining altitude the moment all three were off.

"Alright then, the next silo is right next to us so." The pilot mumbles to himself as he flies right on top of the next silo pack.

"And my time is here." The stocky dude gets up as he leaves the mounted machinegun, pulling his rifle from his back.

"Nobody touch my gun now ya hear." He adds as he turns to look at us.

"Except if you're a sexy broad. Then I'll let it slide. Now~ CAWABANGA!" He cackles as he jumps off the Blackhawk.

" Hey, we just searched the ones by the door. They indeed seem to be scavengers. Although..." And the radio in the heli speaks up.

"Although?" The pilot asks.

" They don't seem to have any resources on them. Food, water, ammo, guns. Nothing." The radio answers.

"Looted?" The pilot asks once again.

" Think so. Their bags are open. We will try to go inside the building now." Takashi responds through the radio.

"Very well. We will keep guard at the bridge in that case." The pilot nods and turns the helicopter to hover over the bridge that connected the small building with the rest of the structure.

" Uhh, the door seems locked." Takashi adds right after.

"You have a shotgun, use it." The pilot shrugs.

"Uhh, tell him to let Khota do it. I think he might be more well-versed in that stuff." I add. The pilot nods, and adds as such.

The last thing I saw as the helicopter turned, was Takashi handing the shotgun to Khota...

And soon after.

-BANG-

A single gunshot echoed.

"That gunshot will start drawing everything here. Guess it's time to actually do something." Rika readies her rifle as she glances at me.

"Say, how about that challenge now~" She adds as she smirks at me.

"Ehh, were you not half aslee..."

-BANG-

And second gunshot cut my sentence in half. The echo coming from the building Takashi and co probably entered...

(Huh? A second gunshot? That, can't be...)

" **A, AAAAAHHHH! NO! NO NO NO!** " Followed by an equally, loud scream. And the fact I could hear it from the helicopter, made it all clearer how loud it was...

(Good...)

"Lower the heli!" I shout as I get up, the pilot just nodded and did as I asked.

"Naier? What's going on? Is something wrong?" Saya asks through the radio.

Without really waiting, or responding to Saya. I jumped down, landing on my hands and feet a few meters away from the now open door. I quickly shake my head and start running towards the door, readying my Scar.

And the moment I entered the room...

-Clack. Clack. Clack. clack... -

The constant sound of a gun hammer clicking. Coming from the deep end of the room. Where a man with glasses, in his early fifties and an armband that had the word 'police' on it was sitting on the ground, with his back against the wall. Aiming a revolver towards us, and pulling the trigger again, and again, and again, his face frozen in shock...

Takashi was also frozen on the side of the room, staring at the man, while Asami was...

"Khota! Khota!" Kneeled down next to Khota, who was sprawled down on the floor, blood pouring from a bullet hole on the upper right side of his chest...

(The fucking, hell?..)

I quickly turn around and run out of the room.

"Medic! We got injured! Gunshot wound on the chest!" I scream as I wave my arm.

Rika's eyes go wide as she turns to look inside the helicopter, shaking the guy with the medic armband who was a bit too focused on falling asleep. The moment he turned to look at her, she said something, which then caused the medic to quickly turn towards me, before as quickly getting up, grabbing a first aid kit from the Blackhawk's wall and jumping out of the helicopter.

The moment he hit the ground he run up to me, then past me, straight into the room, me following behind him right after. He then quickly ran up to Khota, almost sliding to a stop next to him.

Without speaking he undoes Khota's vest and grabs the neck of his shirt, pulling it to look at the bullet wound.

"Fuuu, too high to hit lung.." He sighs as he visibly relaxes, then opens his first aid kit.

"You girl! Keep pressure on the bullet hole!" He shouts as he passes his hand under Khota's shoulder, causing him to wince in pain.

"No exit wound, the bullet is still inside. Can't remove it here with all the infected coming, I'll have to do it on the helicopter. And can somebody stop that damn clicking!" The medic shouts as he points at the policeman at the far end of the room, who was still dry-firing his revolver.

I glance at Takashi, who was still frozen.

"Takashi." I walk up him, no response, his finger still on the trigger of the Ithaca m37...

I glance at the shotgun, before with a quick motion, I put one hand on the butt of the gun and with the other, I pull back the forestock, ejecting the bullet that was in the chamber, then leave the forestock pulled back as I bring one hand to Takashi's shoulder.

"Wake up!" I shake him as I shout. Takashi shakes his head and turns to look at me like a fish.

"Is that Rei's dad?" I ask. No response.

"Takashi pull your shit together! Khota is fine! Is that Rei's dad?!" I ask again, louder this time.

"Y, yes, yes!" Takashi loudly responds as he snaps back to reality.

"Then speak to him. He knows you. Take his gun away and make sure he has no other way to hurt us or himself." I respond as I point at the man who was still pulling the trigger of his empty revolver.

" *N, Naier?...*" And a meek voice speaks up from my radio. I glance at it and take a deep breath, before letting out a sigh.

"Yes Saya?" I ask.

"Is, everything alright? You, you just said that somebody got shot. Are, are you alright?..." Saya asks right after.

"Yea. Khota got a bullet to his chest..."

"Shoulder." The medic corrects me.

"Shoulder. We found Rei's dad, he's in shock, I think..." I continue.

"Are, you ok?" She asks again.

(No fucks given for your canon love interest? Damn Saya that's cold.)

"Yea, I'm fine. So is Khota." I answer, Saya, didn't respond...

"Hey, Naier right? Help me get the guy up. The others seem to still be trying to stick their fingers out of their asses. And the kid is way out of it to walk by himself." The medic motions me towards him a couple of times, Khota now having a bandage plastered on his wound. I nod and walk up next to Asami. Who was still crying her eyes out.

"We lift him up on three, the pain will probably help him snap out of it so he can get up and walk." He adds as he slides his hand under Khotas injured shoulder.

"Get the heli to the side where the team disembarked, we're coming in." The medic adds as he speaks to his chest radio. As I tap Asamis's shoulder, who silently turned to look at me, her eyes red from the crying. She then nodded slightly as she looked away, sliding herself back before hugging her knees...

" You might wanna hurry then, I don't think we ca, Shit! One got past us! Keep your eyes up! One of them dead fucks is coming towa, never mind, he just walked off the ledge..." The radio responds. The medic just shakes his head as he jerks his shoulders.

"Ok, One, two, three!" And, we pulled Kohta to a sitting position. Who, ended up screaming in pain as his eyes darted open, Asami quickly putting her hands over her ears as she tightly shut her eyes.

"Kid! Kid can you hear me!" The medic then shouts.

"UUUUghhh! It hurts! It hurts! I don't want to die!" Where the first things Kohta shouted.

"You won't be dying. But we need to get out, come on! On your feet!" He loudly responds as he gets up and walks to my side, then starts helping Khota up by the armpit.

While the medic was dealing with Khota, I turn to glance at Takashi, who was kneeling next to Rei's dad, his revolver now in Takashi's hand, staring at Kohta with his eyes wide open.

"Everything alright here?" I ask as I walk up to Takashi, who, just shook his head.

"He won't answer back, he just glanced at me before turning to stare ahead." Takashi responds.

I fold my arms as I glance at the carton box next to Rei's dad, half of it full of grains, along with several water bottles that also had grain inside. The ones inside the water bottle having sprouted.

(He sprouted the grains to eat them? Smart. But, how long was he stuck here with the corpses banging at his door?)

"We need to get him on the heli. And I think we better tie him up." I sigh as I keep looking at him.

"Don't you think that's a bit extensive?" Takashi asks.

"And what if he flips out mid-flight and jumps off the Blackhawk? Are 'you' going to tell Rei that?" I ask. Takashi just looked at me, and after blinking a few times.

"Y, yea, yea you're right. For his own safety. But uhh, he got no handcuffs on him." He sighs as he turns to look at the man. I nod slightly and turn around to see that Kohta and the medic were already gone, Asami still blocking her senses from the world around her.

(... Asami really broke down huh. Not that I blame her, I don't even know how I'd react if it was Saeko or Saya in Khota's place...)

"Hey! Come on! We can't stay here forever!" And Rika pops up from the door, motioning us to move.

"Got any handcuffs?" I ask.

"What? Naier I apprised the sentiment but now it's not the time to be kinky." Rika replies as she stares at me.

(Really now Rika?...)

"Tie up the guy's hands to the Blackhawk in case he freaks out on the heli." I sigh as I point at Rei's dad.

"Oh. Uhh no, I don't any, but we got tier-ups." She responds.

"Good enough. Help Takashi get the man on the heli, I'll get Asami." Rika just nods at me as she quickly enters the room, while at the same time I ran to Asami.

"Come on, time to git." I say in a low tone as I kneel next to her, grabbing her shoulders and sightly pushing her up. Asami just followed the force I applied on her without responding.

And so, like that, we walked out the damn room, heading towards the helicopter that was waiting for us by the bacony's edge. After we all 'safely' got on, the helicopter quickly started to lift before turning to fly to where the stocky dude was at...

(Well, that went like shit...)

I close my eyes as I take a deep breath, sitting on my seat shortly after. Then open one eye to glance at Rei's dad, one hand tied to a metal pole on Blackhawk's wall.

"Here kid, take this for the pain." The medic hands Kohta two small pills as he speaks.

Kohta takes the pills and swallows them without speaking...

"Hey guys! How did it what the fucking fuck!?" The stocky dude exclaims as he enters the helicopter.

"They should take effect in twenty minutes or so." The medic adds as he ignores the stocky dude.

"Why didn't you give them to him sooner?" Asami asks while sitting next to Kohta, hugging his uninjured arm with both her arms.

"Because it's not for the pain he's feeling now." The medic flatly responds. Causing Asami to blankly stare at him.

"I'll have to remove the bullet from there, that means I'll have to poke around the wound, maybe even cut it open some more" He adds as he sighs...

"Is, there no other way?" Asami asks as she glances at Kohta with a worried expression.

"Not unless we return to base, and our medical tents ain't exactly first priority. Since our enemy can kill us with a damn bite." The medic drops his shoulders slightly as he speaks.

"Plus, the longer we take the worse it'll get..." He adds as he glances at the bandage on Kohta's shoulder, a small spot of blood slowly, yet steadily spreading from the center of the bandage.

"So, I'll try to..."

-KA-BOOM-

And a thundering explosion cut whatever the medic was saying short...

(Oh what the fuck?! What now?!)

"Are we under attack?!" The sniper shouts as he looks out the helicopter. I quickly glance out of the Blackhawk as well, only to see smoke coming up from a bridge in the distance. And...

"This is demolition team gamma! We need immediate assistance! Right fucking now!" The main radio on the Blackhawk screams out.

"This is Hawk six. We just heard an explosion and are seeing smoke to our right. That you guys?" The pilot responds.

" Yes! One of our explosives went off preemptively! We got no casualties but we're still not done setting the damn explosives! And we're already starting to see a lot of movement! We need fire support! Now!" The radio shouts back.

"This is not far from here, we can be there in one. We can not pick you up though, we're full." The pilot answers.

" Our own extraction will be here in five, cover fire thill then would be helpful!" The radio responds.

The pilot turns to glance at us, turns the helicopter towards the last remaining member we had yet to pick up...

"What are you even trying to blow up..." The pilot grumbles.

" A secondary bridge. It's not being used by our transports, so it only benefits the infected to move between landmasses. " The radio calmly responds.

"Not a boring moment huh..." Rika glances outside as she keeps her hand over her eyes to keep her hair out of the way.

It must have taken less than a minute for us to take the generic dude in and reach the point of the smoke, which had all but nearly dissipated. The location was indeed a bridge, which was now missing one support beam from underneath.

One side of the bridge, was a residential area, with a relatively big amount of corpses. The other side was full of tall buildings, some of them being skyscraper-sized, and while I could not see the streets there very well, the parts I could though were...

"There's, a damn horde on the, uhhh, business sector." I point towards the left as I speak.

"These zombies, are all business." Rika adds right after...

"... Rika, I'm gonna hand you over my title of lamest jokes." I chuckle.

"Hey you chuckled, so it means it was not lame." Rika chuckles back.

"Hey Naier, what is going on? You are not coming back yet? What horde?" And my radio speaks up.

"Uhh, yea, we need to wait for the demo team to extract first." I respond.

" *The who what now?* " Saya asks with a confused tone.

"... Wait. You, didn't hear anything?" I ask as I tilt my head.

" *Hear what?* " Saya asks back.

"Explosion?" I respond by asking yet again.

" *Uhh. No. Did, something happen? Are you ok?* " Saya asks back.

(She must have asked me if I'm ok over five times by now...)

"Yea, nothing to worry. Just a small delay." I answer.

"Don't worry, I'll bring your boyfriend back in one piece~" Rika, who had leaned over next to me adds right after.

" *What? Hey! Your voice is too clear! Don't stand so close to him!* " Saya shouts back.

"Ohh, very receptive~" Rika chuckles again as she leans back.

(Khota is out cold and Rika is making innuendo jokes. Then again, considering she has been in this job for quite some time. It would make sense she seems so lax about it, and it's not just her, other than Takashi and Asami, the others don't seem that shaken about it. I just hope the guy will be fine, vital hit or not, getting shot is no fun...)

"Uhh, bad new guys. I don't think our fuel will last us a five-minute levitation plus then a trip back to base. I'll have to leave you here and come pick you up." The pilot then cuts us off.

"Sorry, but I am 'not' going down on that street." The sniper points towards the horde-infested roads.

"You won't, the roads are too narrow for the bird to fit in anyway. I'll leave you, uhhh. There, the building on the edge before the river, next to the skyscraper. It's like seven to six stories tall, should be tall enough to keep out of trouble. And the roof seems clear." The pilot adds.

"I can't go through, need to keep an eye on the kid." The medic speaks up.

"Yea, and we should have one more person to keep an eye on our new friend." The pilot nods as he starts to move the heli.

"I will stay, he knows me." Takashi raises his hand.

(... Great, so much for 'YOu WiLL jUsT stAy iN tHe HeLi aNd sHoOt'...)

I shake my head as the Blackhawk reached the roof, and then softly lands on it.

"Ok then. Time to give em hell!" The stocky, aka machinegun dude exclaims as he grabs the machine gun from the helicopter, takes it off, then grabs a couple of boxes of ammo and gets off.

"Hey! The fuck you doing with my gun?!" The pilot shouts. The stocky dude just ignored him and walked towards the edge of the roof with the gun over his shoulder, a merry skip on his step.

"Oh whatever. I'll be coming to pick you up anyway..." The pilot sighs.

"Not like he'll be able to hit anything from this far up with that thing..." The sniper shrugs as he also exits.

"Who knows, maybe he'll surprise us all." Rika chuckles as she also exits.

And so, all of us got off the heli, which then quickly took off.

After getting off, I looked around the roof.

Other than a single door in the middle, the place was empty, no benches, no nothing...

"Huh, is it allowed for buildings to be this close together?" I whisper to myself as I walk to the edge of the roof and towards the skyscraper, which must have been what. One, one and a half meters away? My self reflecting on the glass panels which it was made out of...

"Hey Naier! You'll miss the party! Come on!" The stocky dude shouts as he waves his arm at me...

I nod and turn to walk towards the group. And the moment I close in.

"Hey, hey. Let's make a bet, If kill more than you, you'll let me..."

"No." I cut him off.

"What? Come on I didn't even finish!" The stocky dude exclaims.

"It probably had something with either Saeko or Saya. So no." I respond as I kneel down. The generic dude next to me fiddling with the radio the pilot handed to him.

"Damn man, you know me so well!" The stocky dude laughs as he also kneels down and starts setting up his 'borrowed' machine gun.

"Hum, like I would ever let that creep anywhere near me anyway."
My radio speaks up.

"Aww come on Saya, I'm not 'that' bad..." The stocky dude drops his shoulders as he turns to look at my radio.

"It's 'Takagi' for you bozo." Saya scoffs.

"And you just got burned, twice..." I shrug as I look through my scope, the guy responding something that I didn't bother to hear...

uncalibration

"... I said red shirt, commando. The one you got was wearing yellow. You aimed too far up and to the left. " Rika sighs as she shakes her head while sitting next to me...

"... Just, I'm working on it. Give me a few..." I groan right after as I lift my head from the scope and turn the top small cylinder that was on it towards the right a few clicks.

"Ahhhhh, and here I was, looking forward to finally having some fun..." Rika tilts herself backward, leaning on her hands as she dramatically sighs.

" *Well too bad for you...* " Saya scoffs right after through my radio...

"Ok, help a brother out here. I'm conflicted. Rika kept saying how 'awesome' you were at the airport cleanup. Yet you didn't even calibrate your own gun after getting new parts on it? Such rookie mistakes should not be possible." The stocky dude chuckles.

"Oh bite me. I had other things in my mind..." I sigh as I keep fiddling with the scope.

(Not that this is an excuse had I ended up shooting one of the demo group's people by accident.)

"Hah. Don't worry, I understand, maybe the pressure of getting squeezed by two girls at the same time is a bit too much for you. Hell, to show you how good of a guy I am, I'll even volunteer to take some of that weight off your shoulders!" The stocky dude cackles.

"You know, I might not be able to hit a corpse while I'm aiming from a six-story building. But I don't think I'm gonna miss your fat ass from this up close." I respond as I keep looking at the scope.

"Hah? Is that how you treat the guy that carried the whole team? Ts, ts, ts" The stocky dude responds with a smirk.

"Excuse me, what?" Rika asks as she arcs an eyebrow.

"What, what. I killed more than all of you combined~" The stocky dude triumphantly blows some air out of his nose as he narrows his eyes.

"That's because you were blindly shooting at a horde. Obviously you'd kill more when the rest of us while we were busy keeping the real threats away from the demo team as it fell back to the boat." The sniper dude shrugs.

"Whaaaaat? I can't hear you~ All I hear is 'Waaa, waaa'." The stocky dude chuckles again as he puts his hand on his helmet, to where his ear is supposed to be, then leans towards the sniper, who just turned to look back down the overrun street with an annoyed sigh.

"Well, you can say whatever you want." I respond as I lift my gun to look through my scope, finger off the trigger, aiming straight at the stocky dude.

"Oh hell! What the hell dude!" The stocky dude quickly leans his upper body away from my scope, which ended up aiming at the generic dude behind him, who was too busy looking through his binoculars to even realize I was aiming at him.

"But do me a favor. You don't know what Saeko or Saya have been through. And, considering you have been acting like a total fuckboi up until now. You'll more likely hurt them if you do manage to get them to open up to you. So quit that lame-ass joke. Also, you'll probably turn them into aggressive man-hating feminists, which is bad for everybody..." I add as I turn to aim back down at the horde. Aiming once again at the corpse with the red shirt that I had missed.

(Well, Saya didn't really go through anything more compared to all the other survivors, since I did save her house and her parents are

still alive with us. And yea, she did have a breakdown, but what did you expect from a rich girl who had her expensive world pulled under her feet. But, whatever...)

-Bang!-

And with a single shot, the red shirt corpse's head blows up.

"Got'im." I add as I turn to look at Rika.

"Ohhh? So we can finally do it?~" Rika stretches before picking her rifle.

" *The way you speak pisses me off for some reason...* " Saya mumbles right after Rika.

"Ahh, come on now, you can't honestly be worried, after commando's little speech." Rika chuckles.

" *T, that is that and this is this.* " Saya grumbles.

" *And he could have skipped the last part...* " She adds with a low-toned whine.

"Well, I do have to admit I find it hard to imagine Miss serious Saeko loudly shouting slogans at the frontlines of a march." Rika responds.

" *Why did you mention only Saeko?!* " Saya shouts back.

"Well, you 'are' already shouting..." Rika shrugs as she smirks. Saya just, grumbles back...

"But enough of that~ Come on, take another shot. We have to make sure this was not a lucky shot, because I'm not going to let you use that as an excuse." Rika taps at my shoulder as she motions with her head towards the horde below.

"Huh. I'm actually impressed you managed to calibrate your gun this quick. Have you done this before?" The sniper asks.

"Uhh. Saw it in movies?" I respond flatly.

(And the gun range...)

"Hah, yea right." The sniper snorts.

"Guy with a missing arm, wearing a bloodstained shirt with an anime character." I speak then up.

"Messy hair with glasses?" Rika asks.

"Yes." I nod back as I take aim.

(You know, it makes me wonder. Is anime here considered to be 'real life'? Like for example, would Gundam here be like Pacific rim from my world? And vice versa? Does this mean this guy has a real life person, or an actor stamped on his shirt?)

With that thought, I pull the trigger. And my target's head, bursts open.

"Ohh, two in a row. So I guess it's on then~" Rika smirks as she takes aim.

"Ok, but what exactly 'is' on..." I ask as I tilt my head.

"Hmmm, how about we go for most confirmed headshots till the helicopter arrives? We will take turns, the harder the target the more it'll be worth." Rika casually aims through her scope as she speaks.

"And the winner will, hmmm..." She lifts her eyes from the scope and turns to look at me. Then glances at my radio, and smirks.

"Have total control of the loser for a whole night~" She adds as she leans towards the radio. And sure enough, after a couple of loud coughs...

" *W, what the hell are you saying?! Stay away from Naier you, you succubus!* " Saya shouts with visible, or more like audible shock.

"Hmm? So you'll take his place then? I don't really mind~" Rika responds with the same smirk on her face. Though you know, the fact that she was smirking at my radio did make the whole thing rather comical...

" *N, no!* " Saya responds almost instantly.

"Humm, that won't do. I need to have some drive, a little bit of risk. It's no fun otherwise." Rika finally leans back as she folds her arms.

"You can have control of me any night you want~" The stocky dude butts in as he smirks at Rika.

"Deal." Rika instantly responds.

"Aww come o, wait what?" The stocky dude's eyes go wide as Rika smirks at him.

"Oh sweet! Ok dude! Make sure you lose!" The stocky dude turns to stare at me with a serious expression.

"I hope you know how to wash dishes and clothes. And mop." Rika then continues, causing the stocky dude to turn and stare at her with a dumb expression.

"What? Control you for the whole night was it not? I've been a tad lazy this week, so chores piled up. Thank you for volunteering~" Rika narrows her eyes with what I can only call an evil smile.

"Ok dude, make sure you win." The stocky dude then turns to stare at me with a serious expression.

"I retire." I instantly respond as I flip my gun's safety.

"Heeeyyyy!" The stocky dude throws both his arms in the air with an exaggerated sigh.

"Uhh, guys?" And the generic dude speaks up.

"Hmm, perfect." Rika chuckles.

"But I'm afraid I can't accept that~" She adds as she leans towards me.

"Guys!" The generic dude shouts again. This time the group actually turning to look at him. While in the meantime, he was staring towards the center of the roof. Where...

"These things can open doors?!" The sniper shouts as he stares at the several corpses that have crept through the now open roof door.

"No, look the door is open towards the outside, I think they were just pushing up against it and opened it by accident..." Rika tilts her head as she looks towards the oncoming corpses.

"Ha, I'll handle this. Maybe then you'll realize that I'm no damn maid." He cackles as he gets up, glancing at Rika as he grabs his machine gun and a couple of box magazines.

And starts heading right, before following the edge of the rooftop until he was adjacent to the stumbling corpses. He then turns to walk towards them, before kneeling down and leaving the box mags. After that, he takes aim with his machine gun.

"Knock! Knock! Motherfuckers!" And with a loud shout, he opens fire...

And, you know. In retrospect, I should have realized it sooner. That the spot he was shooting from was, bad...

Bad, because obviously with a gun like that, not all of the bullets would find a target. And behind the corpses, was the skyscraper. The glass skyscraper.

Do you know how many people work in skyscrapers? Apparently, a whole fucking lot...

As when the stray bullets pierced right through the skyscraper's glass panes. The glass, shattered. Letting what I can only call a sea of corpses waterfall out of the window.

And while the corpses from the same high floor as us ended up free-falling between the small gap between the buildings, the ones from the floor above us...

"Oh what the fuck?!" The generic dude shouts as the corpses from the upper floor started crashlanding right onto our roof.

"Shiiiiiiiieeeet! How many of em were inside that fucking building?!" The stocky dude screamed as he kept firing at the now slowly growing horde on the roof, causing everything to essentially stumble towards him, and slowly swarm the roof.

"How long till the helicopter?!" The generic dude shouts as he turns his radio.

"Ten minutes?! Fuck! I don't want to die here! We're compromised! We have a horde on our roof!" Was the generic dude's response to what the radio answered.

"What the hell do you mean 'How?' BY FLYING FUCKING ZOMBIES THAT'S HOW!" The generic dude shouts at the radio again.

"Naier? What's going on? Why is everybody shouting?" And my radio speaks up. I just glance at it and took a deep breath.

"Uhh. Don't freak out. But we might have horde spreading on our roof..." I respond calmly.

" *WHAT?!* " Saya shouts right after, thankfully the constant gunfire from the stocky dude's machine gun drowning her voice.

"You're freaking out." I answer.

" *What do you mean don't freak out Naier?! How did a horde get on the roof?!* " Saya yells back.

"From the taller building next to us." I answer as I keep looking at the horde, then look behind me, at the steep drop, and to the horde on the street.

(... Ok, think. Think...)

" *Are you sa...* " And as Saya begins to speak, the constant stream of gunfire from the machine gun ends.

"Fuck! Out of bullets!" I hear the stocky dude shout as he starts taking small steps backward after picking the box magazine he took with him. He then slapped the machinegun with an angry expression as he opened the top cover and took out the empty box magazine...

"Keep your eyes up!" Rika shouts as she takes aim to shoot one of the nearby corpses. The stocky dude turning to look at her as a single corpse that was ahead of the rest lunged forward in a falling motion, grabbing the stocky dude's machine gun as it fell towards the ground, ending up essentially hanging from the gun with its hands.

"Oh what the fuck?! Get the fuck off me you smelly bitch!" The stocky dude shouts as he violently yanks his gun, the corpse getting flailed to the side, he then quickly reloaded his gun by placing the new box mag under the gun and pulling the belt of bullets on the open top of the gun.

"Now where was I!" He grins as he closes the top and pulls back the charging handle, and as he lifts his head, he found a face, mouth gaping open.

"Ah..." Was the only thing he managed to say as the face collided with his...

"AAAAAHHH!" And with a loud scream, he fell backward, machine gun still in his hand, now aimed towards, us.

(Oh fucking hell!)

"Get down!" I shout as I jump towards Rika pulling her to the ground with me. The sniper, who was next to us, didn't react. And...

-BRRRAAT!-

A single burst.

"GuuhhAAAAaaaaa!" Followed by a loud scream next to us. Which then quickly started to dissipate, as if it was quickly picking up distance...

And, silence...

As quickly the panic started, as quickly it ended, now only the moans and crunching sounds of bones being broken left...

"What, the fuck..." The generic dude, who was the only one left along with me and Rika whispers.

"WHAT THE FUCK!" He shouts again as he lifts his rifle.

"Stop eating him you fucking freaks!" He screams as he opens fire...

(Shit, and now he's getting everything towards us.)

Rika probably thought the same as she glanced towards the now oncoming horde, and quickly rolled to grab her rifle.

Yet before she could take a shot I get up and go next to her, lowering her gun by putting my hand on its barrel.

"What are you doing?!" Rika shouts as she turns at me.

"We need to!..."

"Get the fuck off of this roof." I cut her off. Rika just stared at me.

"We don't have enough ammo for all of them, plus we have no space to move, they will reach us before we can take them all down." I

continue. Rika, stays silent for a few seconds, before letting out a shuddering sigh as she lowers her head.

"Go where? We're on a roof, not way out." Rika whispers as she leaves her gun next to her.

"... I'm, sorry I got you into this..." She adds as she glances at me.

" *Naier what's going on? Get off the roof? What's going on there? Please don't do anything stupid...* " And my radio speaks up, the voice behind it talking with an almost begging tone.

"Nothing to worry about, just..." I glance over the edge of the building. And the gunshots that echoed came to an abrupt end once again. Until, one more, different sounding gunshot echoed. Turning to look towards the generic dude, I find him sprawled on the floor, motionless, a handgun in his grip as the corpses surrounded him.

"Standard procedure. I'm still aiming to be back sundown." I add as I turn to glance at the radio.

"I'm going to turn the radio off for a few." I continue.

" *Naier wai!* " And before Saya could finish, I switch the radio off.

"Just in case..." I whisper as I glance at the corpses, then look back down again the only thing between the sea of corpses and me, being a couple of open, thin windows...

(Window. Open window. If I jump from here will it break under the pressure?)

"Rika. Open windows under us." I speak up as I glance at her.

"I don't know how bad the insides are, but staying up here is not going to end well." I add as I turn to face the steep drop.

(Don't do anything stupid was it?)

And I walk off the building...

And as I quickly closed into the window, I extend my arms. Violently stopping my fall as the window's lower glass shattered from the momentum of the impact with my legs.

"Fugh! Fuck that hurt!" I groan as I felt my arms go numb. Nonetheless, I shake my head and look to my left, towards the opening that led into the floor, which...

"Oh. Well, ain't that fun fucking tastic..." I groan as I let out a loud sigh. While not as bad as the roof, the building still had several corpses inside. Also, it was dark. The only difference was, that the corpses inside were all staring towards the ceiling.

"Naier?!" And a female voice shouts from above me. Lifting my head I find Rika staring at me with a worried expression.

"Quit shouting! You'll get them all on us!" I shout back, which in retrospect, was quite retarded. As now two of the corpses in the room had turned to look at, me...

Rika glances behind her before she pulls her handgun.

"Shit!" Was all she said as she disappeared from view, only a couple of gunshots echoed from above, which again caused the corpses in the room to look up.

(There! Now or never!)

I take a deep breath and kick away whatever glass shard had remained on the window, then use the lip of said window to step on it to balance myself as I extended my arms towards the building's opening, Thankfully, reaching it without much of a problem.

(Hope my arms don't give out...)

And, I let go of the window and grab the upper part of the inside frame with both hands, pull myself inside the room. Going over a

desk that was next to the window, and boot first on a corpse. Sending it to the ground as I landed on top of it. All the while, gunshots still echoed from the top.

I quickly pull my knife, and stab the corpse on the side of its head. And just as the corpse stopped moving, the gunshots stopped.

(Come on Rika! Don't you go dying with everybody else!)

I leave the knife in the corpse's head, ready my scar, and open fire to the nearest corpse, then the next, and the next, quickly moving towards the inside of the room.

The moment I passed the first two rows of desks, I lift my scar towards the ceiling, switch to full auto, and let out a short burst, hoping that the noise would draw the corpses from the far end of the roof, where Rika was at, to where I was standing. Though that had the side effect of drawing every corpse in this room towards me as well...

(Shit! Move move move!)

I let go of my Scar-H and do a quick turn around, almost crashing into a corpse that I barely managed to skim past from..

(Rika was never shown to be a quitter, no way sh...)

Before I could finish that thought, I found myself getting shoved to my left, against the wall.

I reflexively raise my right arm as I turn to look to my right, to find a corpse's head inches away from my head, both it's upper and lower jaw chowing down on my arm guard.

"The fuck did you come out from?!" I shout as I push myself off the wall and start walking in reverse towards the window, Dragging the corpse with me. Glancing behind the corpse, I spot three more of them coming up the stairs.

"Oh for crying out loud!" I pull my handgun as I start to take steps back, and press it against the corpse's forehead. While at the same time, cracking sounds started to sound off from my arm guard and the pressure on that spot started to increase.

"Piss the fuck off already!" And I pull the trigger, the corpse instantly lets go of my arms as it falls backward. I quickly glance arm guard as it turn to run to the window again.

(Fucking thing crunched through carbon without breaking its teeth...)

Just I lift my head, I see Rika jumping onto the same window I used. The window once again shook violently under the new weight.

"Oh holy hell!" She shout as she slightly flailed her legs, turning her head to look down, only for her glasses to fall off her head and towards the street below.

"Hey! That's my favorite visor!" She shouts as she keeps staring at the glasses as they disappear in the corpse sea below...

(I see her priorities are the same as Shizuka's...)

Without speaking I quickly run-up to the window, lean out, and grab her boot...

"IIIAAAHH!" And much to my surprise, Rika lets out a rather, girly scream as she lands her other boot flat on my face. Which sent me stumbling back, which then caused me to lose my footing off the desk that I was on and land on my back with a thud, my legs still on the desk.

"Ugh! Fucks sake..." I groan as I open my eyes and lift my head to look up towards the corridor. Only to find three bodies, dangerously close to me...

(Oh shit!)

I quickly try to reach for my handgun, only to realize that I never put it back in its holster, and I was no longer holding it.

(Oh come on!)

I then grab my Scar, only to find I could not fully pull it as the sling was stuck under me...

Before I could do much of anything else.

-Bang-

A single gunshot, and the nearest of the three corpses flying back, and spectacularly fell on the corpse behind it.

And with a second gunshot, the last standing corpse kissed the ground.

"Are you alright?!" And Rika's head pops up from uhh, between my legs?

"Oh, I'm just perfect..." I groan as I give up trying to pull my Scar-H and start looking around me, finding the handgun sitting within arms reach right next to me.

"Sorry for that kick. But you really need to speak up when you intend to grab somebody's leg while they're hanging over a window." Rika adds as she extends her arm towards me. Then lifts her head to look up.

"I'll keep that in mind..." I groan as I take her arm.

"Now unless you want to give up now. I suggest we move." She adds as she mentions with her head. A rather, large group of corpses coming up the staircase.

"Any ideas? Because I don't think charging towards the staircase is a good idea with how many of them keep showing up." She asks as

she glances at me. While at the same time, I got up and gathered my stuff, knife included.

"Uhh..." I then look around the room again. This time focusing more on 'what' was in the room...

Other than the staircase ahead of us, there was the staircase that led to the roof right next to it. There were also two doors on the wall to our left, both open, Or more like, broken. also two doors to the wall to our right, these closed. And right in the corner between the right wall and of the staircase that went down. A metallic, sliding elevator door.

"Well?" Rika asks again as she looks back out the window.

(We are six stories up. Jumping is an obvious no-go. So one exit is the stairs, the other is the elevator. Both are where the corpses are at. Fuck. come on, think, think, think...)

"I got, nothing..." I whisper as I keep looking at the oncoming corpses.

"Well, I guess we at least get some points for the effort. Damn skyscraper next to us needed to have free falling zombies..." Rika sighs as she looks back inside, the corpses now about halfway through to us.

(Wait, the skyscraper...)

I quickly run up to the closest broken door to our left, Rika following behind me. And sure enough, behind a big desk with an equally large office chair, a window that was facing the skyscraper. Which was still, one or two meters away from this building. Sadly the window pane ahead of me was still acting like a mirror, so I could not see if that floor was also a corpse party...

I lift my scar, switch to full auto, and let out a short burst, the window installed in this building shattering, while the windowpane of the

skyscraper became full of cracks.

I then quickly run to the office chair, grab it, and lift it with both hands over my head.

"This better fucking work!" I shout as I throw the chair at the window. And, the window shatters. Revealing, an empty room.

(GOD FUCK YES!)

"Oh my..." Rika whistles at me before she runs up to the desk and starts pushing it.

"This probably just drained all my luck for the next couple of decades." I take a deep breath as I help Rika push the desk until it reached the well, right at the same time as a corpse loudly groaned as it stumbled into the room.

"Of course they would not stay away." I whisper as I turn to look behind me.

"Then we better bail house!" Rika shouts as quickly climbs the desk, and without a second thought, jumps into the building right next to us. Leaving me alone in the room with now several corpses. At least until I also got up desk and jumped onto the adjacent building. Landing with both feet on the ground with a crunching sound, as the floor under me was now full of broken glass...

"Uhhh, haaah.." Rika then leans on her knees and takes a deep breath, before letting out a deeper sigh.

"You think they can get to us?..." She asks as she looks at me. In response, I turn to look behind me. And as one of the corpses reached the desk, it stayed there. Or more like kept trying to walk through it, arms stretched towards me.

"They can't get on the desk. And even if they manage, I don't think they can 'jump'..." I respond as I turn to her.

"Good..." She adds as she sits on the ground, wiping the sweat off her forehead.

"Hah, hahah. I can't believe we just survived that." She chuckles as she closes her eyes with a smile.

"You don't seem very sad that your team just got munched on." I glance at her as I let out a deep breath.

"I guess it would look that way." Rika answers, as she opens her eyes to look at me.

"I have already mourned my first partner's death. It didn't bring him back." She adds with a slight smile.

"Instead I got an E.M.P. in the face." She adds as looks away trying to keep her smile from fading.

(... Wait. Oh fuck, I forgot her partner died in the manage, right before the E.M.P.)

"Uhh, and now I look like an asshole." I sigh as I also glance away.

"Don't be, I would be among the casualties if not for you." Rika responds as she shakes her head.

"Besides. I think you have bigger problems to worry about." She adds as she chuckles, then points at my radio.

(Oh crap, right, I closed it while Saya was screaming at me.)

"Uhhh, yea right..." I blinks a couple of times as I pull my radio from my chest pocket...

And the moment I open the radio. I heard, silent sobbing, along with the occasional sniff.

(... Oh come on now...)

"Did you drop your chocolate chip yogurt?" I ask as I tilt my head.

" *N, Naier!? Naier! Naier!* " Saya instantly shouted with a cracked voice.

"I mean, when I was a kid I did drop mine once, it was heartbreaking." I respond as I let out a sigh.

" *You're, not being funny! I though you died!* " Saya shouts back as she kept taking a couple of involuntary breaths.

"Yea, I guess. I'm fine, though the only ones left are me and Rika." I respond.

" *Thank, God...* " Saya let a cracked sigh, before taking a deep breath.

"Better thank the poor s.o.b. that left the lower floor window open..." I answer as I turn to look at the corpses amassing at the room we were in some time ago. Then at the empty room we were in, desks, chairs, water coolers, everything jammed at the staircase that went up, and down. Essentially blocking off the now giant empty wide room from the other floors.

" *Where are you now? Are you safe?* " She asks, this time with a much calmer voice.

"Uhh, yea, think so. No corpses where we're at. that being a skyscraper, both staircases on our floor seem blocked off." I answer as I keep looking around.

" *I, see...* " Saya responds with a low tone.

"Anybody other than you in our group knows that this thing went downhill?" I ask.

" *No...* " Saya responds.

"Good, try to keep it that way. The last thing I need is you or Saeko flipping off and running off to find me." I answer as I sit on the ground.

" And why shouldn't we! We won't j... "

"Saya, the last thing I need right now is worrying whether you or Saeko wind up dead while I'm not there." I cut her off.

" And what about us then?! Are we supposed to just sit on our thumbs?!" Saya yells back at me.

"Yes." I reply flatly.

" W, wha, you can't... "

"I'm already in this situation Saya. Throwing yourself under the wheels ain't going to bring me back faster. At best it'll fuck my focus and make me make mistakes I would otherwise avoid." I cut her off again.

" I can't just sit and wait!" Saya yet again loudly responds.

"Who said anything about sitting and waiting you dofus." I reply.

" Wha! Who are you calling a dofus you nincompoop!" Saya yelps back.

"The person who forgot that she's holding a radio. Instead of running off, inform your father, get us a new extraction point." I answer.

" F, fine..." Saya mumbles.

"No pressure, just, you know. Rika has been looking at me funny ever since I saved her butt." I chuckle.

"Oh?" Rika just arcs an eyebrow as she lets out a dry laugh out her nose.

" *I'm going to tell papa. Don't do anything stupid ok?* " Saya quickly responds, and the radio goes silent.

"Huh, guess things must be pretty serious if she didn't even react to that." I answer as I glance at my radio.

" *Things ARE serious you idiot!* " The radio shouts back.

"Indeed, now that I'm gone, that fat ass general might try to creep up in your room..." I respond with a serious tone...

"*Don't make jokes like that! I'm scared enough as it is!*" Saya responds with a loud tone.

(True that, I actually just scared my self too...)

"Yea, good point..." I respond as I let out a small sigh.

And with that, silence...

"So? Now what?" I ask after a few silent minutes, turning to look at Rika was sitting next to me...

"We managed to inform that we were under attack and that we are alive. It's just..." Rika answers as she closes her eyes.

"Just?" I ask back.

"I, don't know if we should tell them that the whole team got wiped." She adds as she opens her eyes.

"How come? You think they might leave us for dead if they find out that it's just the two of us left?" I ask as I tilt my head.

"All the helicopters belong to the army. You are not part of it, and neither am I. So yea, I can think that." Rika nods.

"Uhh, Saya you got all that?" I ask as I turn to look towards the Radio.

" *What?* " Was Saya's response.

I then take off my radio from my chest pocket, and hand it to Rika.

"Tell her the gig. I'll look around for a way out without the need to donate an arm." I speak up as I turn to look around. Rika just nods.

And, as Rika started speaking. I started to walk around the room.

(Hmm, other than the two blocked staircases, there's a set of elevator doors, and that's about it. The barricades are also way too thick, essentially the whole staircase is clogged, I can't even see past it...)

I then turn to look at the building we came from, towards the second room that was adjacent to us.

(That room looks empty, but past that, I see movement. And I'm not going back there if I can help it.)

Then I walk up to the elevator doors.

(Hmm, they are slightly ajar. I could pry them open.)

I give the left door a few loud knocks. And after a few seconds.

(No response. So if the elevator is behind this door, it's hopefully empty. Better if it's not though, we could use the cables to climb down. Though slipping and falling would be really ugly.)

Just as I finish that thought, I felt somebody tap my shoulder. Turning to look behind me, I see Rika extending the radio towards me.

"Done?" I ask, Rika nods.

"If they won't give us a transport I'll find one myself. Was essentially her response." Rika chuckles as I take the radio.

"What a Saya thing to say." I answer as I put my radio in my chest pocket. A silent 'Humf' coming out from it...

(Though that could also lead to Saya getting wrapped with the wrong people...)

"So, I'm ready to get impressed right about now. So please impress me. Tell me you found a way out." Rika folds her arms arching an eyebrow at me.

"Only one." I tap the elevator doors as I speak.

"Dark, claustrophobic, and deadly high? You sure pick the best first locations for a date." Rika chuckles.

" *Hey! I can hear you you know!* " The radio butts in right after Rika finishes speaking.

(Oh now you heard her huh? Selective hearing at its best.)

"Huh, where did I hear that one before?" I shrug as I kneel to try and pry the door open, Rika helping me along.

(I think Saeko said something like that in the supermarket?...)

After we finally pryed the door open, we looked inside the dark insides.

"Well, the elevator is not here, neither is the next door one." Rika casually leans in as she speaks.

"Down we go?" She asks as she turns to me.

"Hmm, wait a sec." I nod as I get up, and quickly run to the broken window.

(Uhh. Here.)

I pick a blunt-looking glass shard and pocket it, then run back to Rika, who just tilted her head questionably.

"These windows are one side only, the membrane they have on the other side makes them rather reflective, not as much a mirror, but..." I respond as I take the glass out and show it to Rika. The glass now reflecting her face on it.

"We can use it to check around corners since we're stuck in a building." I add.

"Ohh, Commando ingenuity strikes back." Rika chuckles.

"I have my moments." I respond as I lean to look down. Then I pick my flashlight from my bag and attach it to my helmet.

"So, we test to see the bottom floor?" Rika asks.

"I say first floor. Remember there's a horde on the road next to the building. The bottom floor is way too risky." I respond.

"Fair enough." Rika nods.

" *Why don't you go to the top of the skyscraper? A helicopter could extract you from there.* " Saya then speaks up.

"Big chance the top floors are swarmed though. Think about it, if there was a horde amount of corpses stuck in the sixth, seventh floor. It means something led them there. And bigger chance if people saw the panic in the streets, they might have reflexively climbed higher in hopes to escape it. Also climbing a rope to the top of a skyscraper from the sixth floor is a big nope for me." I respond.

" *Just, be careful ok? Please...* " Saya mumbles right after.

(... This must be the most honest please I ever heard from her.)

"Don't worry. Just get us that extraction point and we'll be there." I answer.

"By the way Rika." I turn to look at her, she just tilts her head.

"You said we should not say the team got wiped. But, I'm pretty sure I saw one of the guys screaming at his radio that we were getting swarmed." I continue.

"He did?" Rika narrows her eyes. I just nod back.

"Well, we might need to start thinking of a plan B then, just in case." Rika groans as she closes her eyes.

"Let's hope it won't get to that, walking all the way back does not sound very fun." I respond as I lean in to grab the cable.

(Hmm I can reach it by leaning at it, good, means I can also exit the same way. Jumping around cables is not something I wanna try from this up high.)

Grabbing onto the cables as I look down, then up.

"Huh? I can see the elevator's bottom from here. Guess that means we can go to the first floor from here." I turn to look at Rika as I speak.

"Any idea how we will open the doors if they are closed?." She asks as she folds her arms.

"If they are shut tight, we go back up till we find a door that is not, otherwise, I'll use the katana's sheath as a lever." I respond

(I mean, considering how Saeko opened the elevator door in the supermarket...)

With that, I start slowly sliding down, Rika climbing on the rope to follow me.

"Hmm? I think one door is open further down. I see light." I speak up as we keep looking down.

"Yea I see it too." Rika adds.

And sure enough, once we reached the third floor, we found the elevator door wide open.

(Well, it's open alright. But...)

"The place is a bloodbath..." Rika whispers.

Toppled desks, flung chairs, broken office dividers. And blood, everywhere. Along with corpses that were shuffling about.

"Keep going?" Rika asks.

"What are the chances the lower floors are better?" I ask back.

"Zero." Rika responds flatly.

"Though even if we make it in. How will we safely jump from three floors up?" She adds.

"Maybe we can use the stairs?" I ask back.

"Maybe." Rika shrugs.

"We can draw them here, make them fall through the open door."
She continues.

"The cable is too close to the door, they will still catch us." I respond.

"We can just climb up after we draw them in can't we?" Rika asks as she leans to look at me.

"... I, just felt my IQ falling for not thinking of that..." I answer as I sigh.

"Heh, it was about time I did 'something' here." Rika chuckles.

"So, how do we..."

"Hey you bastards! Over here!" Rika cuts me off by shouting towards the open door. Most of the visible corpses in the room turned to 'stare' at our direction.

"Well, that worked. Up we go." She smirks as she starts climbing up.

- five minutes later-

A corpse walks through the open elevator door and plummets to the dark abyss below. Its groan dissipated as it disappeared, only to hear a 'thud' a few seconds later.

"And that's twenty..." I say as I keep looking below me.

"Ok, maybe hanging on a rope for so long was not a very smart idea..." Rika lets out an annoyed sigh as she also looked down.

"I'm actually more worried about the fact that there might be corpses leaning against the elevator's doorframe. Entering the room with them there would be too risky..." I respond.

"Aaaauughh, please don't speak about reasons to keep hanging here." Rika groans.

"Hmm, well the twentieth corpse took its sweet time coming, I'll lower myself to check if there are more on the way." I respond as I let myself slide slightly.

"I'm just, going to stay here. God, I feel like a damn monkey..." Rika answers with a dejected voice.

"It was your idea." I chuckle as I lower myself a little higher than door's height. The room now looking, emptyish. There were still corpses, but most of them looked stuck among the rubble, or were on the other side of the room.

"I didn't know we'd stay here 'this' long." I hear Rika answer with a whiny tone.

"Saya, I'm probably going near corpses. So don't randomly speak up please." I glance at the radio as I let myself slide down slowly.

" *You can close the radio until it is safe to speak.* " Saya responds.

" *Just, don't do anything reckless...* " She adds with a low, almost sorrowful tone.

" I'll be fine Saya, it's not like it's the first time I get stranded." I chuckle as I lean to look towards the door.

" *That's what worries me...* " Saya responds.

"Ok, as much as I want to keep taking. Going silent." I answer as I close the radio.

(Now, focus. If Saya started sobbing just because I closed a radio, I don't want to find what she will do if I get bit...)

I take a deep breath, and jump the small distance between me and the solid ground, landing on a little further than the doorframe of the elevator, and instantly, I roll forward.

Before I could barely get back to my feet, I heard a loud 'thud' behind me. Turn to glance behind my back as I pulled my combat knife, to find a corpse sprawled on the floor, right in front of the doorframe.

(Oh cheeky fuck.)

I silently walk up to it and throw a quick glance around me to make sure there were no other corpses nearby, and before it can start getting up, I push it back down by stepping on its back. Then, as I kneel down, I bring the knife right at the middle of its neck, the corpse quickly stopping whatever movement it was doing. Well other than its head, that started biting air.

(Seriously, cut the spinal cord and the head keeps moving. Wonder if that means that a decapitated head can still 'work'...)

With that thought, I push the mostly motionless body down the elevator shaft. Then, turn to look at the room.

Just like before, there was one big ass room with walls made of glass panes, the only difference being, that this room was not empty. It was cluttered as fuck.

(I see corpses behind the desks and rubble. Some of em are actually trying to get here, others are uhh, trying to chew on bones? I mean it would make sense that if they started eating somebody since the start of the outbreak there would be nothing left of him or her by now. But they don't figging give up, some of them seem to be trying to bite the ground. Is the smell drawing them or something? And speaking of smell, closed locations, and spoiling raw meat, really don't mix together..)

"Rika, place is clear for now. Come on." I lean towards the shaft and look up.

"Finally~" I hear Rika sigh. And shortly after, she was standing next to me.

"The damn wire was starting to dig into my boobs, Ack! What's that damn smell?" Rika casually grumbles as she fixes her suit, only to end up closing her nose as she glances around the room.

"Uhh, why are you not wearing a vest in the first place?" I ask in a low tone as I walk towards the stairs.

"Forgot to wear it after I took it off in the helicopter." Rika answers as she slowly lets go of her nose making a disgusted grimace as she swallowed.

Upon reaching the stairs, I am met with a bloody, yet empty staircase.

(These look slippery as hell.)

I sigh as I move down a few steps, then glance behind me, towards the room, before looking over the stair's railing.

(And I see a lot of movement down there, think that is on the bottom floor?)

And so, we went down the stairs to the second floor. And upon looking over the stair railing again.

(... Movement my ass, the first floor is overrun. Good thing the constant noise they are making did not alert them when Rika shouted. Or it did but they can't figure a way up?...)

I turn to glance at Rika, and make a motion to be quiet, she just nods and pulls a hunting knife from her boot. While I, decided to go full samurai on this, drawing my Katana.

The reason? Well since the first floor was a no-go, we had to reach the window panes on the second one. Which, in all honesty, was as fucked as the third floor...

"Ok, before we go on." I turn to glance at Rika as I back up a few steps...

"There might be no way for us to land safely on land, so we might need to return to the old building, and end up diving into the river. Is your gear waterproof?" I ask.

"No." Rika responds flatly.

"Uhhh. Ok. Just in case then. Field strip the rifle and put it in the bag, worse case we toss the bag on the street before we jump, then come back to pick it up." I take off my bag as I speak. The shove my handgun and radio in it.

"The impact from the second floor can break them you know." Rika responds as she starts disabling her rifle, throwing the occasional glance around her to make sure the corpses were not sniffing us up.

"I'll figure something out." I respond as I keep looking around as well.

And so, after my bag ended up getting some considerable weight, we went back down. And keeping a watch on my footing, I walked forward with my left side up against the wall.

Upon meeting the first office worker that seemed to be bothered by our presence and decided to block our way, I ready my blade, and with a forward stab, I pierce right through its skull, the well-dressed corpse falling on its knees with the blade still in its head.

Not wasting momentum, I keep moving forward towards the next corpse that was now crawling towards us. With the blade still embedded in the first corpse's head, I ended up essentially spinning to unstuck the blade and bring it down with a sideways slash on the next corpse. Which didn't seem to really mind its new gash and newly missing arm as it kept walking towards me.

With one arm missing, I just grabbed it by its remaining arm before it could grab me instead, and then stomped it back, sending tumbling onto a bunch of destroyed desks a little further to my right. The noise-causing several corpses that were in our way to move further to the right, while at the same time, the corpses on the right side of the room started crawling towards us.

"I don't think that was very smart..." Rika whispers as she glances at the corpses to our right.

Keeping silent, I moved forward till I reached the first window. Outside, under us, I could see a narrow pedestrian walkway, medium-sized trees on it in a line. And after the walkway. The next building. The left side of the walkway, which led to the main road, was already flooded with corpses.

(... A bit too high to jump on the floor, the trees are too short.)

"Yea, get ready for a run." I speak up as I take a step back, and aim my scar-H towards the window at the far end of the room. Before

Rika could respond, I open fire, shattering the windowpane with a couple of shots, both of this building, and the one next to us, along with sending a couple of corpses that blocked our way to the ground.

"Ok fuck silence! Move!" I shout as we break into a sprint, jumping over the fallen corpses before finally reaching the small gap between the two buildings.

(Uhh, there is a small, desk height wall made of concrete on the other building, not hard to jump on to, but there are broken shards on it...)

"Ohh If I end up bleeding out from this I'm going to sue." I grumble as I jump, grabbing with one hand a spot of the window that did not seem to have any glass shards protruding from it, after that, I quickly punch another spot of the window from whatever shards I could see, and then finally I vault over. Quickly turning to clean the whole window with the butt of my scar afterward.

Rika then also jumped over to my side of the building, and not a moment too soon, as 'a lot' of corpses started to enter the room we were in from the stairs of the lower floor.

So now, we were inside a room, the same as the desk room we used to jump into this building from before. Except for the door, this time it was closed, though it did have a bullet hole in it.

"Do I want to know what's going on the other side?" I ask with a small sigh as I walk up to the door.

"Do we have a choice?" Rika asks as she stops next to me, leaning to look through the bullet hole...

"Hmmm, I don't see anything. I can see the window on the far end as well..." She then takes a step back, while also pushing me back. And with a quick motion, she opens the door.

(Well, this could be worse...)

I walk up to the doorframe, take out the glass shard, and use it to look over the blind spot and...

"Oh holy fuck! Run!" I shout as I grab Rika by the arm and bolt out of the room.

"Huh, what's goi-WOA!" Rika responds questionably as I drag her out of the room, until she looked to her right, towards the staircase that led to the first floor, or at least that was supposed to be there, as the only thing you could see, was corpses...

The moment we reached the end of the room, I look over the window, this one being glass from top to bottom.

"Ok, the distance is not too big, we should be able to reach the river." I nod, take a step back, and lift my scar. With a short burst, the window was in pieces.

"Well, now everything knows we're here!" Rika shouts as she quickly runs through the now broken window, and straight into the river...

(Damn. She didn't even blink...)

I quickly hold my bag with both hands, take a step back, and then dash forward...

And a second later, I was in the air, quickly plummeting towards the river.

(Fucking De-Za-Vu!)

Right as I was about to pass over the pedestrian walkway, I toss the bag, looking at it as it safely landed on the grass. And a few seconds later, the world turned into a blur, both sound and sight.

Though only for a split second as I quickly got my bearings, realizing that I was now underwater, so, I quickly swam back up.

And the moment I managed to swim back up, I checked to see if I still had my scar-h on me...

(Good it's here, and FUCK it's hard to stay afloat, uhh, deep breath, the more air you have, the easier it is to float.)

And so, after taking a deep breath

"Rika!" I shout as I look around me.

"Over here!" A female voice responds from down the stream, a purple-haired woman, already halfway up a nearby ladder.

"Hurry up! That gunshot will get the whole horde on the bag!" She adds as she starts climbing again.

"I'll go the other way! Keep fire support from a distance!" I shout as I aim towards a ladder further down that was on the other side of the river.

After making sure I had no visible nasty surprises on the top of it, I close into the ladder and start climbing up.

(God I feel twenty kilos heavier right now.)

After finally climbing up, I bring my scar-H up and turn to my right. Instantly shooting at the nearest corpse. The gun let out a cloud of what looked like mist? Or thousands of tiny droplets from the barrel.

(Gotta love how dependable this thing is.)

I then turn to look towards Rika, who was already running towards the bag I tossed. The problem was...

(Oh damn, that's, a lot of corpses...)

The walkway between the six-story building and the building next to it was already flooded, corpses now sprawling all over the walkway Rika was on, though they were still relatively away from her.

I was about to lift my scar and take a shot, when I noticed that there were several shadows closing in from behind me...

(Oh shit!)

I duck down and move out of the way, only to see a corpse appearing where I was standing a second ago, trying to hug air. Turning to look around I noticed that Rika was not the only one getting swarmed.

(Oh that's just fucking great!)

I lift my gun, take aim, and shoot the corpses between me and the road that connected with the bridge.

And, as I run past them, I turn to look towards Rika, who had already reached my bag. Problem now was, the corpses from the walkway had closed off her way back, and the end of the path she was on, led to the main street, the flooded, main street.

(... She's surrounded...)

She turned to look at me with a calm expression.

"Toss the bag and jump into the river again!" I shout. Rika nods, and start running towards the edge of the walkway, tossing the bag the moment she stepped on the railing, which with an ark, landed on the bridge that connected the two landmasses, the one that was full of explosives. She then dove into the river, again.

In the meantime, I ran to the bridge and grabbed my bag. Which was actually right next to a small bundle of thick sticks...

(Huh? These are military-grade dynamites, not C4?)

And, a crazy idea came over me...

I run back and glance at the river to see Rika climbing the ladder I was on some time ago. And then, I lift my Scar-H, aiming straight at

the explosives, throwing one last glance at the horde over the bridge.

"Stupid ideas-a-plenty..." And single shot. Followed by a very loud explosion, that nearly threw me off my feet.

(Hooo crabs, that was more intense than I thought...)

I shake my head and run off the street that was probably about to get swarmed. And to the walkway I used to come here, Rika now standing by the ladder, looking at me with a dumb expression.

"... Well, that is one way to attract attention..." Rika glances at the now smoking bridge, or at least what remained of it...

"I recommend we go hide in a house now, unless you want to try blowing up the parade that is bound to pass from here." She adds as she turns to me.

"Agreed." I nod.

"I also hope we find a spare change of clothes. I'm drenched and I can feel my whole suit sticking on me..." She adds as she unzips more of her suit and tries to 'air' it...

And with that, we moved towards one of the houses further down the walkway.

Jerk-y

I was sitting on a double bed, the Scar-H disassembled in front of me on a towel. The blade unsheathed next to it.

"Hmm, I don't think I missed any part..." I whisper as I fold my arms. Glancing at the blue jeans and white shirt I was wearing.

" *What? Excuse me but I did not hear you very well.* " The radio, which was also on the bed responds. A calm voice talking.

"Uhh, I was just talking to myself." I answer as I pick the radio up.

" *Oh, I did not mean to disturb your concentration.* " The voice responds.

"Don't worry Saeko, not a lot to disturb. I'm just watching paint dry. Or more like, water dry..." I chuckle.

" *I see. So the gun is fine even after getting dipped in water?* " Saeko asks.

"Ya. So I'm more worried about the blade. What exactly should I do? Just leave it as is?..." I ask as I tilt my head.

"*Y es, if you made sure you cleaned it as I instructed you, just leave it.* " Saeko awnsers.

"Aight..." I answer back.

And then, silence. And after a few seconds...

(Awkward...)

"Uhh By the way Saeko..." I speak up.

"You ain't going to try and sneak out the airport the moment Saya takes back the radio, are you?" I ask.

" Hmm? You made it pretty clear that you don't want me to do anything reckless like that. " Saeko answers.

"Yes, and you instantly agreed, which makes it kinda hard to believe..." I retort.

" Should I not? I have full faith in your choices. " Saeko answers again.

" Not that I do not want to rush outside and look for you. But I know that it would be a foolish decision. Considering how far you probably are. " She continues.

"Yea, and walking my way back. It does not sound very fun..." I sigh as I lean on the bed with one hand, then turn to look out the window, the blown-up bridge slightly visible from here, along with a huge amount of corpses that mindlessly kept walking off the now blown bridge and into the river.

" Saya is talking with her father about that matter right now. " Saeko responds.

"Hopefully they will be able to get an extraction to come soon too, spending a night in an unbarricaded house surrounded by corpses is not very high on my wish list..." I answer with a slight sigh.

" Hmm? But did we not stay in a house like that? Just the two of us? " Saeko asks back.

"Yea, but. Well, I feel safer with you around." I answer as I keep staring at the blade.

"O, a, ahh, hehe. Umm, it would seem that your compliments still manage to catch me off guard..." Saeko lets out a small chuckle as she answers.

(Should I tell her that it's a fact and not a compliment though?
Nahh...)

And after a few more seconds of silence...

" *By the way, Naier. Thank you.* " Saeko speaks up.

"Huh? What for?" I ask back.

" *For informing me.* " She answers.

"You're, welcome?" I respond, Saeko just giggled back at me.

"By the way, does Shizuka know about this?" I ask right after.

" *Shizuka?* " Saeko asks back.

"Yea, isn't Rika really close with her?" I respond.

" *Oh, you are right. But, no, I do not think Saya has informed anybody else.* " Saeko answers.

"I see, well. Big chance ism, Shizuka will hog the radio for herself if she finds out..." I trail off as I fold my arms with a slight smile.

" *That, could be a problem. Though leaving her to worry, is not something I would like to do.* " Saeko responds.

"Yea, I'll go speak with Rika, she probably knows better than any of us what to with Shizuka." I continue as I nod to the radio.

" *Agreed. Tell me if I should bring the radio to her.* " Saeko replies.

With that, I get off the bed and turn to exit the room, leaving the radio next to the disassembled gun.

After that, I find myself in a small hallway, a door in front of me. To my left, a window. To my right, the hallway ended to another open door. Before turning to the left and disappearing behind the wall.

(Rika was supposed to take a bath, but the door to the bathroom is open, So...)

I walk up to the door in front of me and knock on the door.

"It's open~" Rika responds from inside. And so, I open the door. Finding Rika staring at her outfit, which was on the chair, in front of her...

In other words, she was in her underwear, with a towel on her head.

"How did you manage to take a bath here, the water was freezing, and the pressure was too low. Ughh, I feel spoiled with how I got used to the warm baths in the airport." Rika grumbles as she casually glances at me...

"... Can you, at least 'wear' a towel?" I ask as I glance at Rika, folding my arms.

"Hmmm? Why? Feel like you'll lose control and attack me?~" Rika chuckles as she turns to face me.

"Considering I have two girls worrying about me, and one was literally crying. That would be a real dick move. So no." I answer as I shrug my shoulders.

"Hmm, good answer." Rika responds as she stretches, then turns to look at her outfit again.

"Great, now people are testing my morality..." I sigh as I shake my head.

"Hey, I was young and pure once. And let me tell you, getting heartbroken from your shining knight because he could not keep it in his pants, is no fun. And these two are living in their own fairy tale right now. Granted it's a fairytale in the middle of the apocalypse, but hey, fairytale nonetheless. " Rika chuckles again as she grabs her clothes.

"Uhh, still too moist." She grumbles.

"That was, oddly specific..." I answer as I lean on the doorframe.

"You're imagining things." Rika shrugs.

"But, did you come here to stare at me? Not that I mind." Rika laughs through her nose as she glances at me.

"Right, we were wondering if we should let Shizuka know about our situation." I ask as I ignore Rika's little remark.

"Hmm, we?" Rika asks back.

"Me and Saeko." I respond flatly.

"Oh. Well, hmm. Knowing her, it's better to tell her. If she finds it by herself she will probably become hysterical until she can make sure I'm fine." Rika folds her arms as she turns to look at me.

"Aight, I'll bring the radio." I answer as I turn to leave.

"Aii~" Rika casually waves at me as she sits on the bed in her room.

(First you test me to make sure I won't mistreat Saya and Saeko, then you casually mention that you don't mind me staring at you while you're half-naked. Double standards much?..)

And so, I went back to my room, took the radio, and informed Saeko about Shizuka. After that, I left the radio with Rika and went to the lower floor...

The bottom floor of the house had a kitchen, a living room, and two more rooms. The living room being where the stairs from the upper floor led, along with it being the 'main hub' or so to speak.

I then head to a full-sized window and open it. The silence instantly getting drawn out by groans, a lot of groans...

(Nope...)

I close the window again. And the noise disappeared.

(Still passing huh...)

I glance outside the full-body window that overlooked the front yard of the house. While I could not see past the closed front yard door. Or the concrete fence wall. There was a horde passing by the house, for quite some time too...

I casually head to the kitchen, and open one of the drawers, picking a closed package of jerky.

"We should check what the fridge has..." I nonchalantly whisper as I open the package and start munching on a string of dried meat.

"Though it should be right before we leave. Both me and Rika agreed that since electricity has been out for some time now, most of the insides of the fridge should probably be spoiled by now. Aka smell like shit..." I turn to the living room, then take a seat on the sofa.

"Uhhh, you know, we were really lucky these corpses are as stupid as they come for zombie types. Can't run, can't see, and can be baited relatively easy. Who knows how many times I'd have died if they were the sprinting lunatic type ones. Even without any crazy mutations, things would have been really bad if these things could see, run and climb..." I whisper as I take another bite out of my jerky.

"Honestly though, I'm more worried about Saeko and Saya right now..." I take a deep breath as I close my eyes.

And with that, I focused on the silence, a silence that tricked you into thinking that there was not a damn horde outside. Though if you focused, you could just make out, the march of the dead...

-Sometime later-

"They're still coming huh? We must be here for more than an hour, yet they are still going strong. Now I really want to know how the bigwigs are trying to deal with these things..." I groan as I open my eyes and stretch.

"They have already sent a couple of helicopter airstrikes in some congregated areas. But you can guess how well that worked. " A female voice speaks up from behind me. Turning to look over my shoulder, I find Rika in black pants, and a baggy white shirt, her hair up in a ponytail.

"Helicopter strikes? When they have jets? Why? They scared they might topple a building or something?" I chuckle as Rika walks up to me, then sits on the armrest of the sofa.

"More or less. Remember that the enemy is squatting right into 'our' city. Tossing a couple of napalms into it would ruin the place we aim to return to, while still not making it a hundred percent sure that we clear everything out. And I'm not even going to mention conventional explosives, they ready tried them, best they managed to do was turn walking dead meat into crawling dead meat." Rika hands me the radio as she speaks.

"So, they're just shooting holes into the water..." I sigh.

"You have a better idea?" Rika asks back.

"Dig a giant hole, fill it with gasoline, and light em on fire." I respond as I shrug.

"Because they would just walk into the hole." Rika answers.

"Put some giant ass woofers on a helicopter and play Ride of the Valkyries at full volume over the hole. Use other choppers to lead hordes to the hole" I shrug again.

"... You, that, actually could work. If we had a big enough hole. Which is the next problem, that being that in order to dig that hole

you will need industrial equipment, and most of them are fried. And if not, they would be way, and I mean way too loud..." Rika stretches as she sighs.

"Diggy diggy hole..." I whisper.

"Don't you need to be a dwarf to do that?" Rika asks with a slight chuckle. I, just turn to stare at her...

"What? Surprised that I know the song?" She asks again with a slight smirk.

"Uhh it's a song about fantasy dwarfs so, yea?..." I shrug.

"Oh, you would be surprised." Rika laughs as she gets up.

"To think I also just upgraded my computer before the outbreak, yet I didn't even manage to use it before the E.M.P. Talk about wasted potential." She adds as she walks up to the kitchen, opening the same drawer I did, and picking a jerky herself.

(Ok, the universe is trolling me now...)

"Did you talk with Shizuka?" I ask as I turn to look out the window.

"Mhm..." Rika responds as she stuffs her mouth.

"Oooh God, this is goooood~" She then almost moans as she closes her eyes. Causing me to turn towards her with an arched eyebrow.

"What? You can't even imagine how it is to eat rations day in day out." Rika shrugs as she turns around to open the drawer again.

"So don't mind me, I'ma pig the hell out now~" She chimes as she takes the whole package.

"I see..." I respond as I turn to look at the radio.

"So now we wait for Saya to come with news?" I ask as I tilt my head.

"Yep~" Rik casually answers as she sits on the armrest again...

"By the way, that demo team. It wasn't returning to the airport was it?" I ask as I lean on the sofa.

"Highly doubt it, they left via boat, the airport is too far." Rika casually answers.

"I see." I nod slightly as I fold my arms.

"Something on your mind?" Rika asks. I glance at my radio, then shake my head.

"No, not really." I shrug, Rika just lets out a 'Hummmm' before returning to stuffing her face.

"Anyway, think I'll go assemble my gun." I get up as I speak, then stretch slightly.

"Okii~" Rika chimes as she lets herself fall on the couch, still munching her jerky.

And so, I head back up the stairs.

"Saeko? You here?" I speak up as I enter the room, the radio responding with a questioning 'yes'

"Now that Shizuka knows, I'll take it the whole group knows?" I ask as I head to the bed and start putting my Scar back together.

"*I t was only her in the room, I think.*" Saeko responds.

"But you take Shizuka is a person who'll stay quiet?" I ask again.

"*Ahh, I, guess not.*" Saeko answers.

"And Khota?" I ask again.

" He is in his room with Asami. They removed the bullet, he is resting now. " She responds.

"I see, at least he's out of the woods." I nod slightly as I finish putting the gun together.

" To be honest, I am a bit jealous of him. Or, jealous of Asami to be more precise. " Saeko sighs slightly as she speaks.

"Jealous? Why? Because they'll be stuck in his room all day now?" I ask back with a slight chuckle.

" Yes ." Saeko retorts with an almost pouty tone.

"Hah, you know I could lose an arm, and they would 'still' send me out right?" I chuckled.

" So, this is what it means to be a victim of your own success? " Saeko asks back as some 'noise' started to become audible.

"Hmm? I'm getting some weird static." I arch an eyebrow as I tilt my head, then tap the radio.

" Oh? Sorry, that was probably me, I just laid down and placed the radio next to me. " Saeko answers.

"For a sec I thought I was running out of battery..." I add with a slight sigh.

" Are you? " Saeko asks back.

"Nope. It's still full, and I think these things can last up to ten hours before needing a recharge." I answer.

" So, a day.. ." Saeko whispers.

"If we use it nonstop all day. Then yes." I respond.

" *And, you can not recharge it?* " She asks yet again.

"Electricity is out, I got no charger, and all the equipment we had is still on the roof..." I sigh as I turn to look out the window.

" *So we need to be frugal with it.* " Saeko responds.

"Pretty much..." I add.

" *Nothing, can ever be ea, oh?...* " Saeko begins to speak, only to stop mid sentence.

" *Ah, Saya?* " she adds right after.

" *How did it go?* " She continues.

And after a few seconds.

" *What do you mean nothing?* " Saeko asks again.

" *They're a bunch of fucking assholes! All of them!* " The radio then shouts with a distant voice.

(... Oh boi, that can't be good...)

I take a deep breath and get off the bed, then start heading down the stairs as the two girls started to speak, and, I think Saeko must have muffled the radio, as I could not make out what they were really saying...

"Rika." I call out to her as I reach the bottom floor.

"Hmm? What's up?" Rika lifts her hand from behind the couch.

(... And she's as chill as ever.)

"Are you ready for some bad news?" I ask, Rika then lifting her head to look at me.

"... I half expected an outcome we would not like, but, hell. Can I say no?" She 'asks' as she frowns.

"Don't think so." I respond. Rika just sighs.

"Alright you two, I've already figured that I'm not going to get good news. So I'm listening, how bad is it?" I then speak to my radio.

"... Well, it, is not good. They... Hmm? You want to tell him? Very well." Saeko responds. And right after.

"... Naier ?" Saya's voice replaces Saeko's.

"Saya." I answer.

" I'm, sorry. I, they refused to send a helicopter this far away for 'two people'.. ." Saya adds in a low tone.

"As expendable as it gets huh..." I sigh.

" It's all that fat ass general's fault! He was even grinning at me as he refused to help! " Saya then shouts back.

(... Huh, the ugly fat bastard was grinning at the pretty schoolgirl as he isolated her. As a man of culture, I am way more worried about this as I should be...)

"So, we go on foot huh..." I whisper.

"While I understand why the general does not want to use resources for a bunch of grunts, this is, just, great.." Rika adds with a sarcastic tone as she lets herself fall on the couch again.

" I'm sorry... " Saya adds with an apologetic tone.

"Not much you could do, the helicopters 'are' all under the army's control." I answer.

"Now, call me crazy, but can you do me a favor?" I ask back. Saya just let's out a sad 'hum?'

"Can you stay with Saeko?" I ask again.

" *What, do you mean?* " Saya asks back.

"Stay in the same room at night, don't trail off on your own." I add.

" *Uhh, why?* " Saya asks again.

"A hunch. So, can you?" I respond.

" *...Yea, fine ok..* ." Saya answers with the same sad tone.

"And, can you give me Saeko for a bit?" I ask again. And after a few seconds...

" *Naier?* " Saeko speaks up.

"You heard what I said to Saya?" I ask.

" *About her staying with me?* " She asks back.

"Yea." I answer flatly.

" *Yes, though I do feel like you might be overreacting a bit.* " Saeko responds.

"Between Shido, Shimada, and trio with Hitomi. I don't think overreacting is the correct word." I retort.

" *I, understand. Do not worry about us. I will make sure nothing happens.* " Saeko answers.

" *But, if you can not help it. Then just come back to us as soon as you can.* " She continues.

"Trust me, I got no intention of taking longer than nessesity." I answer.

" *Good, because. I might have gotten a bit too used at not sleeping alone...* " She replies.

"But you won't be sleeping alone, Saya, remember?" I answer as I chuckle.

" *How can you even make jokes right now...* " I hear Saya's whiny voice through the radio.

"Beats drowning in despair." I respond.

"Ok, so. We need to figure our next step." I add.

"*Any ideas?*" Saeko asks back.

"Uhh, what would be the second-best place to be now that the airport is out.?" I ask as I tilt my head.

"An outpost." Rika then speaks up as she lifts her hands, pointing her finger towards the ceiling.

"... Hmm, that demo team with the boat went downstream. So..." I fold my arms and tap the radio on my arm.

" Saya, can you get a map of the outposts near us?" I add.

" *Uhhh, where are you though?* " Saya asks back.

"Hmm, good question. I can't really check outside right now. But, uhh your father should know where the grain facility was at. From there, we should be next to a stream. So just check for outposts around the facility." I answer.

" *Yea, ok. I'll do that.* " Saya responds.

" *And. Please be careful.* " She adds before turning silent.

" *You want me to do something too?* " Saeko asks after a few seconds.

"Just make sure that I won't have to burn anybody alive after I come back..." I respond with a casual tone.

" *Hummm. I think I can manage that.* " Saeko answers with a slight chuckle.

"Ok, so. I'll check in again and an hour, going to close the radio to save battery." I add.

" *Very well.* " Saeko replies and...

" *Oh! One more thing.* " Speaks up again. And before I could react.

" *I love you.* " She quickly adds before the radio turns silent.

"Dawww, so sweet. I think my sugar levels just topped up~" Rika chuckles.

"Oh zip it." I roll my eyes as I close the radio.

"Still, ain't you being overprotective?" Rika asks as she lifts herself to look at me as she folds her arms over the sofa's back, then leans her head on her arms.

"Not the first time Saya told me capiten fat ass was staring at her. And as I said, last thing I need is returning back to the airport and find out that I need to gut a pig in a suit as it screams." I answer flatly.

"Oh my~ But I thought you said you'd burn em alive." Rika just, chuckled.

"I'm always open for some variety." I answer as I shrug.

"Hah. Well yea, ok. I don't blame you, if I had girls that good-looking, I'd be worried too. Plus mister General had already made himself a

name for being a little pervert. He got caught 'wandering' near the female baths one too many times." Rika chuckles.

"Just great. Saya is being targeted by a known fat pervert. Was this supposed to calm me down?" I ask as I fold my arms.

"Relax, it's not like he can really do anything, especially since your little girlfriend is not just a random civilian." Rika shrugs as she lies back down on the sofa, disappearing from view.

(Wishful thinking...)

"So if she was a random civilian the story would be different?" I ask back.

"Hmm, well, just think of it like that. He won't probably creep in anybody's room. But how many girls stuck in these dirty camps would accept 'bending over' in hopes to get better treatment?" Rika asks back.

"Oh, so the guy is a passive-aggressive abuser in a spot of power." I groan.

"I'd be more worried about your purple-haired friend if I was you." Rika casually lifts her hands and flicks her wrist as she responds.

"... Do I want to know why?" I ask.

"Well, I might be talking out of my ass here, but that guy your group? What was his name again? Takisho?" Rika keeps wiggling her finger as she speaks.

"Takashi." I correct her.

"Yea that. The dude must have taken the saltiest expression I've ever seen when our late machinegun friend started hitting on your little purple haired friend. Almost as if 'he' was her boyfriend. For a minute I honestly thought he was going to pick a fight" Rika lifts her

head to glance at me before disappearing back behind the sofa's backrest.

"... That guy just don't wanna quit does he..." I groan as I let out a sigh.

"Ohhh, sound like I just hit juicy history~" Rika quickly appears from behind the sofa's backrest again, this time staring at me with a grin.

"Come on, spill it~" She adds as she narrows her eyes, still grinding at me.

"There's nothing to spill. Saeko's an amazing person and he probably fell for her." I shrug.

"And you are fine with that? You don't seem worried in the least." Rika tilts her head as she speaks.

"If I was worried about every single guy drooling over her I would probably stop sleeping at night, as I said, she's a pretty amazing person. I just trust that she won't go stabbing me in the back while I'm not looking." I respond as I fold my arms.

"And besides, if she does. Saya's also there, and I get the feeling she would not miss a beat to snitch her out if she finds out." I continue.

"Ohh? How so?" Rika asks as she tilts her head.

"Just because they agreed to put up with each other, does not mean they ain't gonna try to make their position better. I'm, honestly not even sure 'why' these two agreed to share. It's not like they're passive as a person..." I answer.

"Ehh, no idea. Never been part of a triangle, especially one where all members are aware of it." Rika chuckles as she shrugs.

"Well, me neither." I chuckle back as I also shrug.

"Ohh, going for broke eh? How come you decided to stop at two then?" Rika laughs.

"Come on now. Even though I managed to somehow prove to them that I care about them both. I am pretty damn sure that if I start fucking around, no amount of proving will be enough. And you know, don't bite off more than can chew. I'm already chewing a whole damn watermelon here." I answer.

"Hah, these must be some big watermelons~ But you said it yourself, neither of them seem to be passive. I mean hell, both of them are from well-known families. Seeing how their parents seem to be among the top dogs in our current merry band of suits." Rika tilts her head as she speaks.

"Hmm? You know about Saeko's father?" I ask as I arch an eyebrow.

"You kidding me? They cleared half the airport for his arrival. Not even the general gets that kind of treatment." Rika scoffs.

"And I don't have to even mention out the Pinkettes parents do I? Half the camp essentially answers to them." She continues.

"Yea, too bad that that half of the camp does not have a single damn shooter to its name..." I chuckle.

"Well, if you want it that bad you can ask the pinkette to ask the general really nicely. Maybe with a maid costume." Rika shrugs.

"We'll walk." I retort instantly, Rika just let out a single giggle out of her nose.

"Shame the new ranked officers from the carrier are from the navy. Means that they can't just take over, since the army stationed in the airport is essentially a mix of ground forces and unlucky conscripts. So we're stuck with what we have." She adds.

"What's worse, that asses inside the walls? Or the asses outside the walls?" I sigh as I point towards the closed window.

"Point. But it does not make it better." Rika answers.

"Soooo, back to the important point. What do we do?" She asks right after.

"Why you're asking me?" I ask back.

"You have been out here without support longer than me. And you reacted faster than me. And while I still think I have your ass beat in a shoot-out. I'm not going to kid myself with thinking that I survived by my own quick thinking." Rika responds as she leans her chin on the sofa's backrest.

"Plus, where you not acting as the leader when it was just you and the other two?" She asks.

"I'm going to be giving orders to a cop. This day just keeps getting weirder." I blink as I shake my head.

"Not just a cop. Chief of the first squadron in the prefecture police mind you, plus, 'the' best sniper in the Special assault team that got sent to clear the airport thank you very much." Rika lifts her finger as she speaks.

"Wait, if you were the chief then you shou..."

"Blablabla I can't hear you~ You lead. Boss~" Rika cuts me off as she smirks.

"... Really now?" I ask back.

"You seem to fail to understand. So let me make it clear." She sighs as she gets up from the sofa and walks up to me.

"As a chief, I failed. When our team's leader failed to react, I didn't do anything, and we got ripped apart. And even before that, I lost my

own partner." She presses her finger against my chest as she speaks.

"And before you say that you didn't do anything either. We're both standing here because of you. You saved my life. I saved none. So yes, I think we're better off with you at the helm." She adds as she takes a step back and folds her arms.

"Fine." I sigh as I lift both arms slightly, then turn to head towards the kitchen.

"Besides, I thought guys liked being on top." She adds with a rather, provocative tone.

"Until they realize that also means they'll have to do all the work. No thanks." I respond without turning, heading to where the cupboard that the jerky was at.

"Ahh? A straight casual answer? How lame, ain't boys your age supposed to get all embarrassed at moments like these? Plus, you just sounded like an old man..." Rika sighs in disappointment.

(Because if we add my old life plus this one, I'm probably older than your ass Rika.)

"Sorry to disappoint, if you want embarrassed schoolboys, go get Takashi." I answer as I open the cupboard...

(Huh, wait a minute...)

"Hmm? Why not the chubby one?" Rika asks as she starts nibbling another jerky.

"Because Asami will probably chew him out, and he will just get depressed. And where the hell did the peanut butter jar go?" I ask as I turn to Rika.

"Hmm, true, guess the chubby one is a bit 'too' easy of a target." Rika answers as she glances away, still nibbling at the jerky.

"... You didn't answer my question." I retort.

"What question?" Rika asks back as she tilts her head.

"Jar of peanut butter? Next to the jerky pack?" I ask again.

"Ohhh." Rika's eyes go wide as she opens her mouth.

"I ate it." She casually continues as she turns to head to the sofa, then plops on it.

"The jar was still sealed." I slightly tilt my head in disbelief.

"And it tasted great~ Too bad we run out of crackers while I was eating, that combination was to die for." Rika casually remarks as she lifts her hand, pointing towards the ceiling.

"You ate all the crackers too..." I respond as I drop my shoulders.

"Hey, don't sound so depressed, I left some stuff in there for you." Rika continues.

"The only thing left here is dried fruit rolls." I retort as I fold my arms.

"They're good for you." Rika casually remarks.

(Ohh you're asking for it.)

Instead of answering, I silently walk up to Rika from behind the sofa.

"Besides, we can't take all that stuff with us an..." Before Rika could finish, I snatch the bag of jerky from her hands.

"Oi? What gives?" Rika lifts herself to stare at me with a frown as I take a few steps back away from her reach...

"Eat the dried fruits, you'll get fat if you keep eating this shit." I answer as I grab a strip of jerky.

"I don't like dried fruits. And I'll lose the calories anyway." Rika responds as she keeps frowning at me.

"It's good for you." I answer as I turn to head back upstairs...

Rika didn't respond. Or, well, I thought she didn't. A few seconds later I found myself staggering forwards, a heavyweight on my back.

"Ohh no you don't~ This is mine~" Rika giggles as she tries to grab the package while essentially trying to piggyback ride me. Though all it took for me was to extend my arm to keep it away from her.

"Ughhh! You damn foreigners and your long arms..." Rika groaned as I started going up the stairs with her still on my back.

"Hearing that from a person that looks less Japanese than me is all levels of weird." I respond as I take a single jerky and stuff all of it in my mouth.

"Oh bite me. And stop eating my jerky!" Rika answers as she starts pulling my cheek.

"Quith southin, you'll get the horth on us." I 'retort'...

"Then give me my jerky you jerky thief." Rika grumbles back as she quickly tries to get the pack, to no avail again.

"Ok, fine" I sigh as I finally go up the stairs. Then quickly grab the remaining three strips, shove them all in my mouth and hand the annoyed sniper the empty bag.

"Ohhhh~ Ah? Ohhh you littleeee..." Rika finally gets off me, only to turn me around, and grab one of the strips that I had not managed to fully stuff in my mouth with her fingers...

And then pulls it out.

"... You know that was in my mouth a second ago right? You're not going to..." Before I could even finish, Rika was munching on the

jerky.

"Eat that..." As I finish, Rika rike jerks her shoulders with a slight smirk, then turns to head back down the stairs, nonchalantly tossing the empty bag aside.

(... Does this count as cheating now?)

After blinking a few times, I head back into my room...

Riverside

-Tap, tap, tap... -

The sound of the constant tapping of my pen getting smacked against the table was the only sound echoing inside the house right now. In front of me, an open textbook.

On it, several things drawn. Or more like, scribbled...

A circle with the word 'Grain factory' over it. Next to it, a Y shape. The upper left appendage of it ending in a wavy pattern. The word 'River' next to it.

At the end of that part, another circle. The word 'outpost?' over it. And lastly, in a bigger circle that had the whole appendage in. 'We are around here.' written next to it.

" *So, you got all that?* " The radio, which was on the table next to me asks.

"Yea. Think so." I answer.

" *Say it back to me.* " The radio adds right after.

"Saya, relax." I chuckle as I shake my head.

" *Don't, tell me to relax you idiot. If I got, if you got something remotely wrong, you will get lost. So say it back to me.* " Saya answers with a commanding tone.

(Jeez, you have a funky way to show that you're worried sweetheart.)

"Uhh, next to the grain factory is a river, the river splits in two, on the side that is closer to the facility, if you follow that river, you will find an outpost. The outpost itself is a bit inland, about two intersections in.

So we should look for a parked boat or guard activity. A refurbished one-floor store with a garage that encircles the whole building serves as the main facility." I start speaking with a flat tone as I stare at the piece of paper. Rika, who was sitting next to me, holding back a chuckle.

"I see you studied for your exams, I'm proud~" Rika whispers as she finally starts chuckling. I just throw her a 'meh' glance.

" *Hmm, good.* " Saya answers, letting out what I think was a sigh of relief?

"C'mon Saya, you can't think I'm 'that' stupid." I chuckle as I close the textbook.

" *I...* " Saya stops speaking.

" *I'm just making sure ok? Stupid...* " Saya mumbles.

"If you say so..." I answer as I get up with a sigh.

"Well, guess that's that then." I continue as I stretch my back.

" *Huh? Are, are you going to go now?* " Saya asks with a worried tone.

"Good question. The sky is starting to dim, and we don't know how far we really are from our target. Honestly, going out with the hope that we'll find another clear, walled-off house like this is a pipe dream. So I'm thinking of staying the night here, leave early in the morning." I respond.

" *I see...* " Saya mumbles.

"Don't worry, I'll make sure nobody touches your boyfriend~" Rika then leans towards the radio with a smirk.

" *Wha. Nobody asked you! And you're not allowed to touch him either!* " Saya quickly replies.

"Aww, I'm not?" Rika answers. Trying to sound, confused? Though that shit-eating grin on her face would say otherwise.

" *Yes you're not!* " Saya barks back.

(It feels like I'm watching a pink Pomeranian fighting over a bone against a troll-faced Rottweiler...)

"But he's so nice~ I can't? Not even a little bit?" Rika continues to talk, slightly shaking her shoulders as she was trying not to laugh...

" *No!* " Saya flatly declares. I then tap Rika on her shoulder, and as she turns to glance at me, I shake my head.

"Fiiiine..." Rika answers as she makes a pouty face.

And, after a few seconds of silence...

"So, uhh. We, really should not be wasting any battery so." I speak as I fold my arms.

" *Ah! Naier wait!* " Saya instantly replies, her annoyed tone quickly disappearing. I reply with a questioning 'huum?'

" *Umm. Just, be careful, alright?* " Saya adds right after.

"Don't worry Saya. I'll be back before you know it." I respond, trying to sound as convincing as I can.

" *And, I, I want to ask you something...* " Saya continues.

" *Privately...* " She adds right after.

I glance at Rika, who just shrugs, and then turn to head up the stairs to the second floor, radio in hand.

And the moment I reached the second floor.

"Ok, so?" I ask.

" *Are, you alone?* " Saya asks.

"I'm on the second floor. Rika is stealing my food on the first floor." I respond.

" *I see...* " Saya mumbles.

" *I...* " She starts to speak, only to stop.

" *It is...* " And stops again...

" *It's just...* " And again...

"Saya. Is something bothering you?" I ask as I lean on the wall, staring at the small, fake potted plant that was inside an extrusion on the opposite wall.

" *I'm...* " Saya once again did not manage to finish her sentence...

And, after a few seconds...

" *You, you won't do anything weird with her, will you?* " Saya finally asks.

"You mean Rika?" I ask.

" *You're already calling her by her first name...* " Saya mumbles...

(Is this a jelly chundere?)

"Saya, let me ask plainly. Will it hurt you if I did something?" I ask.

" *W, what sort of question is that? Of course it will, I'm already having to deal with Sae...* " "

"Then I won't, it's that simple." I answer.

"... " Saya didn't respond.

"You don't believe me huh?" I ask.

" *I, want to, but...* " Saya mumbles.

"Let me set it another way. If I hurt you, you'll leave. I don't want you to leave." I answer.

" *Sweet talker...* " Saya mumbles again.

"Where did I hear that one before?" I chuckle.

And, after a few seconds of silence...

"Still, I'll admit I'm kinda hurt you have 'this' little faith in me..." I add as I tilt my head.

" *H, hey! It's not my fault, I mean, you already want both me and Saeko and...* " Saya responds

"Did I ever hide that fact though? I made it clear the moment you showed some actual interest. Same way I'm telling you that I won't do anything behind your or Saeko's back." I answer as I lift my head to look at the ceiling.

" *But...* " Saya mumbles before turning silent...

And after a few seconds...

" *Uggghh! Why does this keep happening to me! You were supposed to spend your day with me. Not get stranded on the other side of town with that perverted weirdo...* " Until she speaks up with an annoyed tone.

"Really feels like we keep getting the short end of the stick since coming to the airport huh..." I add with a slight sigh.

Saya stayed quiet, too quiet...

(... I get the feeling I'm about to hear...)

" I'd rather leave than stay here if they will keep doing this... " Saya grumbles in a low tone.

(Stupid.)

"You know our chances of survival will..."

" I don't care, at least when we were out there, we were together. " Saya cuts me off.

"That, I can't really deny." I respond with a low sigh.

" It's stupid. Why does this keep happening? Why papa keeps picking you for these stupid missions, can't he just send another idiot... " Saya grumbles right after.

(Low key you just called me an idiot, again. Also, it was Rika that nailed me with this mission. But, let's not tell her than, lest she actually tries to kill her.)

"Had to be me, someone else might have gotten it wrong." I chuckle as I answer.

(... And I just death-flagged myself by saying that, didn't I...)

" Then get it wrong, that way they'll leave you alone... " Saya retorts in a low tone.

(Feels like Saeko said something along those lines too. Victim of your own success huh...)

"We'll figure something out. After I am back. But for now, just hold on tight. And, uhhh..." I stop talking and look at the radio.

"I don't mean to be the ass here, but the battery is already down to two out of three." I add as I keep looking at the radio's small screen.

" What? Why didn't you say so earlier you idiot?! Close the radio, we will need it for more important stuff than this! " Saya quickly answers.

"Hey, making sure you are mentally well is as important." I answer as I chuckle.

"... *S, stupid. I'm not weak, I'll be fine...* " Saya mumbles in a low, whiny tone.

"One thing does not nullify the other. But yea, shutting down." I add, and after a few seconds, I close the radio.

"... Ho boy..." And let out a huge sigh as I start going down the stairs...

The moment I reach the bottom floor I find Rika on the sofa, munching on something, again.

"Girlfriend problems?" She asks as she arches an eyebrow.

"Yea, because 'somebody' is teasing them too much." I answer as I fold my arms.

"Hey, don't blame me, it's their fault that their reactions are so cute. Or well, at least the pikette's are. The other one feels like she'll try to stab me if I push too much..." Rika shrugs.

(Huh, you're not 'that' far off about that...)

"Soo, what's the plan? Hunker down for the night?" Rika casually asks.

"Yea, not a fan of wandering around at night." I shrug.

"Haaaaa, good. Because I don't feel like getting off this sofa." Rika lets herself sink on the sofa as she speaks.

With that, I go back up the stairs, and towards my room.

After reaching it and closing the door behind me...

"... And now, it's boring time..." I groan and drop myself on the bed, absentmindedly staring at the ceiling...

"... This would actually be the perfect moment to have Saeko or Saya with me..." I sigh as I turn to look out the window, the sky slowly starting to turn orange, which in turn, slowly made the room I was in take a darker shade.

"Hopefully by tomorrow, the corpse parade will have passed. Then, we'll go to our right, since the grain factory is towards our left. If we're lucky, we'll reach that outpost tomorrow. Saya told me it's near the river, but the distance, is something I don't know..." I fold my arms under my head as I keep speaking to myself...

It could have been the silence, or the overall hecticness of the day. But I found myself drifting in and out of sleep pretty fast...

- Several weird dreams about semi-auto crossbows and korek charms later -

"Infinite durability katana. Heheh, heee... uhhh" I slowly open my eyes as I mumble something stupid.

I blink once, twice, thrice. But the light does not return, instead, I am greeted by a dark room, a very, dark room...

I look to my left as I sit on the bed. Out the window, a cloudy dark sky.

"Uhh, it's, night?" I ask myself as I tilt my head.

(A cloudy night, no wonder I can barely see shit now that we got no lights...)

I carefully get off my bed and reach for my helmet, which was on the nightstand next to the bed along with my mask, while the rest of my black clothes were on the floor.

I then take the flashlight and open it. The light shooting straight at my face.

(Ughh! Fucking hell!)

I reflexively close my eyes before shaking my head. Rubbing my eyes as I get off the bed.

By the next time I opened my eyes, I could at least see where I was walking.

(Damn, feels like a horror game in here...)

I shiver slightly as I turn to exit my room, into an equally dark hallway, the only place actually visible being the conic shape that the flashlight illuminated, and the dim moonlight from the window behind me.

After doing down the hallway and to the stairs, I then head down.

On the main room, on the sofa, Rika was out cold, her pants haphazardly tossed on the floor.

(Huh, kinda risky that both of us fell asleep...)

I head to the full-sized window that was near the sofa and open it. And much to my surprise, silence.

(Hmmm? Did the horde pass over?)

I tilt my head and head up to the concrete wall. Hold the flashlight with my mouth, and with a quick jump, climb it.

With half my body over the concrete wall, I take the flashlight to my hand and check the road...

Other than a couple of corpses that were simply staring towards god knows what, the road was clear.

(If the road stays this clear, then we can leave once the sun is up...)

Before I let myself fall back down, I looked to my left, and then, I saw it. About five houses away from ours, on the second floor.

A light shining from the inside...

I blink a couple of times and turn my flashlight towards the said building, and the light quickly disappeared...

(... shit...)

I quickly close my own flashlight and let myself fall, then, just as quickly I move back inside the house and close the window behind me.

(That light, it turned off the moment I shined at it, in other words. Somebody was watching me.)

I walk up to Rika, kneel next to her, and shake her.

"Wake up." I whisper as I glance behind me, towards the window.

Rika didn't respond, at all.

"Rika wake up." I say again, this time louder, shaking her even more.

Rika this time did respond. Actually, she responded a bit, too much. As she turns towards me, her upper arm going over my shoulder. But, she didn't stop, she kept turning, up to the point that her upper body leaned off the sofa and onto me. Ending up with half her body off the sofa. Ending in a rather uncomfortable position. As she ended up groggily opening her eyes right after.

"Hmmm..." She lifts her head to look at me.

"Uhhh, if you wanted to sleep together you didn't have to wake me up..." Rika mumbles as she closes her eyes again.

I take the flashlight, open it, and shine it on her face.

Rika frowns as she tries to hide her face, trying to bring her arms over to where my flashlight was.

"Rika wake up, we might end up with some unwanted visitors." I say as I pull the flashlight away from her searching hands.

"Muuuhh. No eye rape please..." Rika mumbles as she keeps trying to reach for the flashlight.

"Must everything you say sound provocative..." I whisper as I start to get up, Rika still leaning on me.

"Quit, stretching me so much..." Rika 'responds' with a moan, finally opening her eyes...

(... For fucks sake woman...)

I let out a small sigh as I keep looking at her...

"Humm, is it go time?" She asks as she stares at me with a sleepy expression.

"Yes, we might get a bunch of weirdos knocking on our door, saw a flashlight nearby." I answer.

"Ah..." Rika finally stops hanging off me and sits on the sofa.

"Shit..." She adds as she stretches.

"How close?" She asks as she picks her pants.

"Couple of houses down, they know we're here. Might be nothing, might be a bunch of nutjobs looking for parts for their new meat bicycles." I respond as I turn to look at the window again.

"Uhh, meat bicycles?" Rika frowns slightly as she finishes putting on her pants.

"Never mind, just get ready for trouble." I respond as I walk up to the window, open it slightly, and glance outside.

(Can't see that house from here...)

I sigh and back off, leaving the window open...

"Let's go to the second floor, with the lights out and the doors closed it's pitch black up there. 'If' we get any visitors, we'll see them before they see us." I motion with my head as I turn to head towards the stairs.

"Right.." Rika also gets up and throws a few slaps with both her hands to her face in order to wake up.

"And I was having such a nice dream..." She sighs as she follows behind me.

(Ok, so, whoever had the flashlight turned it off when they realized I was looking towards them. One, is they are scared and hoped that I didn't see them. Two, they will want to get the jump on us and hoped I didn't see them...)

After going up the stairs I sit down, the window on the bottom floor visible from here.

"Hey, you forgot the window open." Rika whispers as she nudges me.

"I didn't forget it. Better to leave an apparent 'opening' that we can manage, than having our, 'might' be foes create one behind our backs." I respond as I get up.

"Hmm, I see. Not a bad idea. Uhh, going somewhere?" Rika asks as she lifts her head to look at me.

"I'll change to my normal clothes." I answer.

"Oh. I'll keep watch over the stairs." She continues. I just nod as I turn to head to my room.

-A few minutes later.-

I was in my full gear. Sitting next to Rika...

"... Nothing so far..." Rika whispers.

"There's a good chance 'nothing' is all we'll get." I respond.

"But in the off chance that that's not the case..." I continue.

"Best time to be paranoid huh." Rika shrugs her shoulder as she keeps staring at the window.

"If nothing happens till the morning, then what?" She then asks.

"We leave, by jumping into the house to our right. Use this house as cover to move away, then go through the back alley. If it ain't clear, we jump to the next house, until the block ends and we end up on the street. Overall, we avoid the street next to the river until we are far enough from the house that had the light in." I answer.

"Extra paranoid." Rika chuckles.

"Other than a couple of retarded decisions I made so far, most of my choices were like that. Don't fix it if it ain't broken." I shrug.

"Fair enough." Rika nods.

"Wait, what retarded decisions did you make?" She asks right after as she arches an eyebrow.

"I'll leave that to your imagination." I answer as I shrug again.

"Ehh, that's no fun." Rika leans towards me as she narrows her eyes with a slight smirk.

"Eyes on the door..." I flatly respond.

"Stick in the mud..." Rika mumbles as she leans back, turning to look at the window.

And so, we stayed there, watching, hearing...

The minutes ticking away...

Everything on the lower floor was completely still, uneventful.

Until, the darkness started to fade...

"... I'm starting to see light." Rika whispers.

"Hmm, let's start packing, the second floor won't stay dark for too long now." I respond as I slowly get up.

"Alright, I'll grab a bag I found and put some basics in it. And change to my normal clothes." Rika nods as she also gets up.

And with that, I move to my room. Then head straight to the desk that was near the window next to the bed, taking my bag and strapping it on me.

Before leaving, I check my vest, or more precisely, the magazines on my vest.

(Hmm, one mag left. And...)

I then check the mag in the gun.

(Hmm, looks like about half empty, so. Twenty and ten? Thirty bullets left total? Aka, jack shit. At least the pistol is still fully loaded, minus the shots fired when the roof got overrun)

After checking that my Katana was not clunking around when moving, I exit the room, Scar-h under my arm.

The door to the room ahead of me wide open. Rika in her normal attire, checking her rifle.

"How much ammo you got left?" I ask I enter her room.

"The rifle has only three left, my handgun is empty." Rika responds as she stops checking her rifle, passing it over her shoulder, next to a blue, medium-sized bag.

"You?" She asks back.

"Two full mags for the handgun, one and a half for the rifle." I respond.

"Hmm, can I borrow the handgun?" She asks as she glances at the P-220 on my side. I just nod and hand it to her, along with the extra two mags.

"I'll head down. Once we're set, we will head out from the window by the kitchen." I say as I turn to leave.

"Roger." Rika answers as she follows behind me.

And with that, we pass the bathroom, and head to the stairs...

(Don't see any changes...)

Nonetheless, I ready my rifle as I go down the stairs.

"Clear." I say after a quick sweep.

I nod and motion Rika to come down. After that, I head to the window I left open, and close it. While Rika made a beeline to the kitchen, opening the drawers and filling her bag with whatever food and water she had not wolfed down by now.

"I'm starting to see clearly outside. If there was a time to go, it's now." She adds as she turns to glance at me. I nod as I sheath my

blade, turning to quickly jog to the kitchen. Then, I opened the normal-sized window that was over the sink.

After that, I climb up the counter and check outside, before finally jumping out.

The sky was now a very dark blue. Only on the horizon the sky was taking a light orange color behind the clouds.

(Chilly...)

With that thought, I straight towards the concrete fence wall.

Kneeling down, I check one last time around me, letting Rika catch up to me.

"I take it no guns?" Rika asks as she stops next to me.

"Unless you can mute it, then yea." I nod, Rika just nods back and holsters her, my gun. And draws her combat knife.

"Ok, over the fence, and then towards the fence at the backside of the house, if the back alley is too hot, we head to the next house until we reach the road." I whisper as I look at the purple-haired sniper.

"Right behind you." Rika nods.

And so, with a deep breath, I get up and jump. Climbing over the concrete wall.

After going over it, before jumping down, I check the house's yard.

Compared to the house we stayed in, the next house had several corpses wandering around in a relatively bloody yard. All of them near the front door, where two 'eaten' corpses lay next to each other.

(The backyard looks empty from here.)

And so, I jumped. And the moment I touched the ground, I moved to the back of the yard. Where I ended up next to a single corpse that was, hitting its head against the wall. And judging from the blood splatter on the wall, it has probably been doing so, for quite some time.

(... Uhh, you do you...)

I ignore the headbanger and move to the back concrete wall, and turn around to wait for Rika, who was not far behind me.

The moment she closed in, I kneel down and motioned to my eyes with my fingers, then point behind me, towards the alleyway. Then interlock my fingers to make a step for Rika. Who quickly nodded and moved to step on my hands. She then tapped my shoulder, and I got up, silently lifting her up.

Not one second later Rika jumps back, and starts shaking both her head and hands negatively. I nod and turn to head towards the next house.

Upon reaching the wall, I climb up just as before, and...

(... Well, fuck me...)

This house looked like an ongoing bachelor party. Probably because the front gate was toppled over, so when the corpses from the passing horde passed, they bled in. The front was plainly put, overrun. The back, was not much better either...

I let out a silent sigh and balance myself on the wall. Rika then climbs up next to me...

"Fuuuuck..." She groans, causing a couple of the nearby corpses to stumble towards the wall, lifting their heads to 'look' at us as they lifted their arms.

Without speaking I start walking towards the back wall while staying crouched...

(Wonder how bad the alleyway is...)

As I think that I reach the end of the wall and look at the alleyway...

The best way to describe it, was a minefield. While corpses were not back to back, there were a lot of them on the ground...

(Yea, no.)

I shake my head and keep walking on the top of the concrete fence wall, towards the last house between us and the street.

Thankfully, there wasn't anything to obstruct us from passing to the final house. Which was honestly as crowded as the last house, if not worse...

(I think I see even more corpses in this house's yard...)

With a small sigh, I keep moving forward, soon finding the reason 'why' this house had even more corpses in it...

Upon reaching the wall that was facing the street, I found that most, if not all of the upper left side of the house's fence wall was destroyed, a tow truck had busted right through it. Its zombified driver still inside, stuck on the driver seat because of the seat belt. I guess that crash would also explain why that part of the road was clogged with corpses.

Shaking my head I look ahead of me again, towards the street...

(... Of course corpses would be stuck here as well...)

Essentially, the wall had corpses chilling right next to it. The street itself had several wrecks on it. With corpses dotted all around...

(Hmm, the cars ain't too far apart...)

"How far can you jump?" I ask as I glance behind me motioning Rika to back off. Rika instead of answering glances over me, towards the cars.

"Uhh well, depends, what exactly do you want to do?..." Rika whispers as she keeps looking at the street.

"The jeep ahead of us that got t-boned by that yellow sedan. We can reach it from here, we then jump to the cop car that is next to it and reach the next set of houses. From there we can get off on the street next to the river, something we can't do here since that pickup wrecked the wall, and the road in front of this house has too many corpses to walk past." I respond.

"All or nothing huh..." Rika sighs slightly as she nods.

"Who goes first?" She asks right after.

"I'm in the front, so I'll go." I answer.

"Try not to slip into the hungry mob then." Rika flatly retorts.

With a slight sigh, I turn to look back towards the road. Standing up and taking a few steps back.

And with a last breath, I dash forward, and jump, arcing over the corpses that had gathered under us.

With a loud thud, I land on the jeep's roof. A rather, slippery roof, as I found myself slipping to my side and sliding towards the hood.

"The fuck?!" I shout as I pull my knife and quickly stab it on the roof, using it as a handle to stop myself.

"The crap was that?!" Rika shouts right after.

"The roof is slippery as fuck! Now move, we made too much noise!" I respond as I get up. Rika nods, and without waiting, she runs to the edge and jumps.

And, the moment she lands on the roof, she slips and falls on her butt, sliding on me like a curling stone...

"Ouuf! Damn, you were not kidding. What sort of paint finish did they use to make the hood this damn slippery." Rika grumbles as she massages her butt.

"Hell if I know." I sigh as I get to a sitting position, pulling my knife out and holstering it. I then turn to look towards the hood of the truck. While the jeep was tall, it was not tall enough to keep corpses from waving their grubby mitts all over the hood. Though the center of the hood 'was' free of grasping hands.

While still sitting I slide to the edge of the roof and look through the front windshield. A single well-dressed corpse was sluggishly clawing at the roof over its head.

(The windshield ain't cracked, so I guess we are safe from that one corpse at least.)

I nod and slide to the center of the roof, then stand on it.

(Uhh, does seem slippery, but the distance to the cop car is too far if I can't get rid of the corpses in the front...)

"Well, fuck it..." I groan as I ready my Scar-H and take aim towards the corpses on the front of the jeep.

I open fire, a single burst, and the corpses in the front fell back, either from getting shot to the head or from the force of the bullets.

(Five rounds, five left.)

Without waiting I let my scar go, pull my knife, run to the edge of the hood, and jump. Landing on the cop car's trunk, thankfully the

corpses around it had turned to go towards the jeep, so by the time they turned again, I was on the cop car's roof.

"Rika! Don't jump yet!" I glance behind me as I raise my hand. Rika just nods leans on her hand as she keeps sitting on the roof of the jeep.

I then turn to look back ahead of me, the next target, the wall...

Which was a full sidewalk away, along with it being about three times the height of the cop car's hood...

(... No way I'm making this jump...)

I bring up my scar-h, then change to the full mag.

I take a deep breath, walk over the siren, and jump on the hood. The quickly aim my rifle at the corpses in the front of the car and fire a short burst.

The moment the corpses were on the ground, I dashed forward, jumping over the fallen corpses and landing right in front of the wall.

Not spending any unnecessary time looking around, I let my scar go and jump up, climbing up the wall.

The moment I stabilized myself on top of the wall, I looked back down, the path I used already taken over by corpses.

"Well, that could have gone worse." I whisper as I stand up and head to the far end of the wall, towards the street that was next to the river.

(Hmm, this road is almost clear...)

With a small nod I jump down, and head in the intersection between the road that Rika was on and the road by the river.

"Rika! Once these fucks leave an opening! Move!" I shout as I raise my scar in the air, Rika stayed quiet as the corpses turned to look towards me.

I then glance around me, since the corpses by the cars were not the only ones that turned to crawl towards me...

(I got seven, eight? Maybe more incoming from where the toppled wall and tow truck is. About uhh, twelve? From where Rika is. And, three from my left, luckily left is the way we need to go.)

Ignoring the mass of corpses ahead and to my right, I draw my blade and quickly head towards the three corpses to my left. The first one was relatively ahead the other two. Which were next to each other.

The moment I close into the first corpse, I stomp the ground before sidestepping to its side. Then, I bring down the blade in a vertical slash, severing both of the corpse's arms with one clean splash. Though the corpse itself didn't seem to give a single fuck.

Before it could turn towards me, I sidestep again and slide behind it, then kick it at the back of its knees, causing the corpses to end up on its knees. And, with one more slash, its head was sent flying.

I then sidestep away from the body and turn around, towards the last two corpses.

(Too close to each other...)

Instead of charging towards them, I silently start walking diagonally towards them. Until I was side by side with them, still at a relative distance...

(This better work.)

I crouch slightly, before darting off towards the two corpses, both of which stopped walking to turn towards the new incoming noise.

Only for the one that was now in front to end up with a strong kick to its chest, sending it stumbling backward, into the second corpse. The impact, while stopping the first corpses from falling on its ass, send the second one tumbling down.

With the second corpse essentially down and out, I walk up to the corpse ahead of me, and with a forwards charge, I stab the corpse right through the head, quickly pulling my blade back. The corpse unceremoniously falling forward.

Turning my sight towards the third corpse, I find it clumsily getting up.

"Naier! Screw that smelly hobo! Run!" And before I could even take a step towards it, Rika dashes past me as she loudly shouts...

I blink a couple of times as I turn to look at Rika, who was running down the road, then look behind me, to find a wall of corpses steadily 'screening' the road.

(O-Shit!)

I quickly sheath my blade and start running after the sniper.

We end up running past a couple of corpses, until I caught up to Rika. Or more like Rika stopped running upon reaching the next intersection.

"We go up the intersection?" Rika asks as she turns towards me.

Before answering I glance behind her, the road next to the river had a slight curve to the right as it went on, in other words, the road disappeared behind the houses.

(The road ahead looks clear for as much as I can see.)

I then turn to look to my right, an uphill road that led to who knows where. This one going straight, letting me see much further away.

(This one is relatively clear for much further, but.)

"We keep going straight, if we find the road blocked, we return here. Going up one or two intersections should be fine, as the outpost is not next to the river. But I'd rather stick close to the river, that way we don't need to worry about going the wrong way. We don't know if 'straight ahead' is really a straight line here." I answer as I start to walk again.

"Good point." Rika just nods before turning to follow me.

As we kept going, I took out my almost empty mag, and took out the remaining bullets. To find out that...

"Only two? Fuck me..." I groan as I put the mag back into its pocket on the vest, then take the mag out of the gun, and add the two extra bullets in it.

"How many left?" Rika asks as she keeps looking at me.

"Less than twenty, more than ten." I answer with a slight sigh as I put the mag back in the gun.

"Damn..." Was Rika's only response.

"Want your handgun back?" She asks right after.

"No, I still got this." I respond as I tap the Katana on my hip.

And so, we kept going, avoiding most corpses in our way, either by simply walking past them from a distance, or by walking on the fence wall of the houses to our right...

-Sometime later-

We were sitting on a fence wall that overlooked an empty, narrow back alleyway that separated the wall we were on, from the fence wall of the next house. The backyard behind littered with four 'dead' corpses.

"When are you going to notify the little ones of our progress?" Rika casually asks, a cigarette on her fingers. A cigarette she picked from a pack she found on one of the four dead corpses behind us. This was also the reason we were taking a break, as by her words 'I won't enjoy it if we are on foot.'

"Little ones. Hah, I can already imagine Saya fuming from hearing that." I chuckle back.

"Hey, to me you are still little ones." Rika shrugs.

(F.B.I open up.)

"And to answer your question. I don't know, maybe when the sun ends up being over our heads I'll note em up." I answer as I glance at her, then look at the cigarette.

"Uhh, don't you have smokes in your room, barracks, locker, or whatever you had in the airport to make such a big deal about this?" I ask right after.

"Nope, run out. And I usually smoke cigars, not this crap. Too bad both are a bit of a precious commodity now." She responds as she takes a puff.

"Huh, I do suppose smokes and booze would run out in the blink of an eye with how stressful it can get right now." I nod slightly as I turn to look at the alley.

"Ha, this kid gets it." Rika chuckles as she glances at the cigarette's burning point.

And with that, we turned silent...

A couple of minutes later, Rika stood up.

"Ready?" Ask. Rika just nods as she throws the remaining cigarette in the alleyway.

With that, we jumped into the alleyway, and went towards the left. Taking the first turn left and ending up by the riverside road again, before going right once again...

We must have walked a couple of minutes when the curved road ended up revealing what seemed to be a big three-floor store not too far from us, a bridge right next to it.

Said bridge being barricaded haphazardly on one side with cop cars and buses, it seemed like they tried to block the road off in a real big hurry. Civilian cars were abandoned all around, both on the bridge, in front of the store, and the roads around, including the one we were on.

The store itself must have been a toy store, as the front face of the building had several cartoon characters drawn on. To the right, a large parking lot, to the left, while not visible, must have been a street, as there were other buildings starting soon after. Also, corpses, a lot of corpses...

"Hmm? Hey Naier." Rika whisper as she leans towards me.

"Go back? Too many here..." She asks. I just nod. And we turned around to walk back the way we came.

"So, we go up the next intersection?" Rika asks again, I nod as glance at a couple of corpses that we had walked past some time ago. Most of em clawing against the fence wall of a nearby house...

The thing was...

"Rika, stop..." I stop moving as keep staring at the corpses.

"What's wrong?" She asks as she glances at me.

"These corpses, the ones by the wall." I motion with my head.

"Hmm? What about them?" She asks again.

"We used the road, so why are these things clawing at the wall?" I ask as I tug Rika to turn around again.

"You think somebody followed us?" She asks as she turns around and starts walking, placing her hand over the handgun's handle.

"I don't know. But if they managed to follow us thus far in silence. And we can't see them, they have the jump on us." I respond as I glance behind me, and then, I saw it.

A man standing on the fence, bow drawn, aimed straight at us.

(The fuck?!)

I quickly grabbed Rika by the vest she was wearing and pull her with me behind a car, crouching down behind it.

"Woa! What's gotten into y!..." Before she could finish, a single arrow landed where we were standing with a loud thud, then recoiled off the road and flew off into the river.

"You..." She continues as she turns to look at the arrow that flew into the river.

"Guy with a bow, same place where corpses were clawing at. Probably not alone." I whisper as I glance from the side of the car, at the side of the pedestrian walkway, yet I could see nothing from this side...

"Can you see them?" I ask.

"Nu-uh..." Rika whisper.

"We can't stay here, they know where we are. Move, we are going to the store." I get up slightly as I speak, keeping my sight towards the back.

"The place that is full of brain-eating dead men?" Rika asks as she also keeps looking back.

"Yes, I'd rather deal with them." I respond.

"Ok, but won't they just. You know, take potshots at us as we go there?" She asks again.

"We go back to back, one of us will keep an eye on our back as we go." Rika glances at me, nods, and holsters her handgun, then draws her sniper rifle.

"I got three bullets left here. That will be three less of them by the time we reach the building." She adds with a serious expression.

"Alright, I'll exit first, pop up shortly after, if one of these assholes gets tries to take a shot, cap their fucking head off. I'll then turn to take aim while you leave." I nod as I do a last check on my Scar, then switch it to full auto.

"Ok, Go!" I loudly shout as I get up and start running. And, sure enough, a second later. A single loud gunshot.

"A-aaAAAHGUAAA!" Followed by a loud scream, and the sound of ripping fabric.

"Assholes!" Rika yells, and I instantly stop, turn and drop to one knee. Rika was already running towards me, and, as for the owner of the shout...

Let's just say that the corpses that were clawing at the fence wall before, were now busy eating lunch.

Now call it instinct, but since I could not actually 'see' anybody, the first place I ended up looking at was the window of the hostile house, and while the insides were dark, the curtains were flowing outside, in other words, the window was open.

Nonetheless, I fire a short burst and, another scream as a single arrow flew from the window, and towards a random direction away from us.

"Move!" I hear Rika shout from behind. And I get up and turn around, Rika already on the ground, aiming towards the house.

I quickly run to the side to move away from her light of sight, then start running towards our target, the corpses towards the store now clearly coming towards us.

(After this they will be on top of us...)

This time, I heard no gunshots, and by the time I turned around.

"Move!" I shout as I take aim, then throw a short glance behind me at the corpses. Their moans grew louder by the second. Rika rolls to the side before spinning to her feet, turning around to run.

(... I can't see anything. There were only two of them?)

"Naier, they're almost on us, we'll get swarmed if we stand still anymore." Rika stops next to me as she looks at the corpses.

"Not much we can do, go to the side, fire the handgun, I'll go the other way and move past when there is an opening, then get on the bridge and draw them there." I point towards the railing next to the river as I speak. Rika nods passes the sniper over her shoulder and runs to the side. While in the meantime I run to the other side. Keeping an eye on the house.

And shortly after, two shots echoed. Turning to look behind me, I see the corpses had turned to creep towards Rika, who was slowly backing off, the road still blocked off.

(Cmon, cmon, move your asses!)

And, after a few seconds that felt like an eternity, I saw an opening, Right next to the end of the wall, no more corpses popped up.

Without the time to wait and see if there were more incoming, I dash forwards towards the open road.

And the moment I dashed past the wall, I glanced to my right, only to find out that the group of corpses has 'not' completely passed, the remaining corpses less than a meter away from me.

(Shit! Shitshitshitshit!)

Instead of stopping, I kept running, leaning forward to avoid any grabby hands.

And as I kept running, the corpses on the far end of the group started to turn towards me, probably because I was not being very silent as I sprinted.

(God this better work!)

I lift my gun and pull the trigger, the nearest corpse that just blocked my way to the ground. Though, none of the bullets found the head, as it kept shuffling about on the ground, slowly getting to a sitting position.

The moment I reached the corpse, I jump. And using the corpse's face as a step, I vault over the remaining corpses, landing behind the group with a roll.

(Bridge! Now!)

As my boots touched the ground, I sping into another dead run. Straight towards the bridge.

"Over here you groaning fucks!" I shout as I undo the scar's suppressor. Turning to face the group the moment I reached the bridge. And with one hand, as the other was holding the suppressor, I aim towards the group and fire a single shot.

I then glance behind me to see the corpses around the cars on the bridge had also started to roam towards me.

(Ok, time to git.)

I start walking towards the way I came as I try to put the suppressor back on, only to see a pair of legs in front of me. Glancing up I spot a corpse, arms stretched towards me.

"Tch." I click my tongue and shove the suppressor in a random pocket on my vest as I move away from the groaning shambler, turning my focus back on the incoming corpses.

(Ok, once she is passed we ca...)

"GAAH!" I didn't even manage to finish that thought when I saw Rika popping up from the group of corpses, and falling to the ground while clutching her thigh. The corpses behind her all leaning over to swarm over her.

"The fuck?!" Quickly raise my scar and pull the trigger, and then keep it pulled. Emptying the whole remaining clip on the corpses around Rika as I run-up to her, grabbed her by the vest, and started walking backward. But, not fast enough, as one of the corpses managed to grab her leg as it lunged forward.

"Shoot that damn thing I'm out!" I shout. Rika in response quickly pulled her handgun and fired three rounds at the corpse's head, which in turn let go of Rika's leg as I pulled her back.

"Aaargh! I'm going to kill these asshats!" Rika screamed as she yanked her rifle. The reason? An arrow was sticking out from the back of her thigh...

As I kept pulling her back I lift my head, the perpetrator standing in the middle of the street with a hysterical expression. Bow drawn, aimed at us.

"The hell's their fucking problem?!" I quickly yank myself and Rika to the side, while at the same time Rika fired a shot from her rifle, and the bowman flung his arrow. The sudden movement caused both to miss.

"Don't fucking move me!" She yelled as she glared at me.

"I'm not letting that bastard get out of this alive..." She hisses as she aims through her scope.

The bowman, realizing that he's probably not as fast as a damn gun, quickly turns to dash towards a nearby alleyway.

And, Rika fired the final shot of her rifle...

"FGHAAA!" Followed by a loud scream, and the bowman was on the floor, clutching his knee.

"Eye for an eye dipshit. Help me up, we need to get out of here." Rika whispers before turning to look at me, passing the rifle over her shoulder.

I pass Rika's arm over my shoulder and lift her up, and then turn around.

The bridge, had corpses, the road behind us, obviously had corpses. And the road to our right, had corpses...

"We're surrounded." I whisper as we keep moving forward, towards the store.

"Check the back of the store." Rika points at the left of the store, past the parking lot. Then turns to look at the arrow sticking out her thigh, running her fingers around it

"No ripped fabric..." She whispers as she grabs the arrow, and pulls it out with a grunt, revealing it to be a field-type tip.

"Silver lining, at least they didn't use the normal arrows with the wide tip, would be impossible to pull out..." She just took a deep breath as she tried to not step with her wounded leg.

After we moved past the parking lot, using the cars as shields against the corpses, we ended up in the backside of the store.

Two giant gates led inside the storage section of the store, both of them open. And in the backspace of the store, another big parking lot surrounded by a wall, this one designed for trucks, seeing how there were multiple box trucks already parked here.

We headed to the nearest one that was in front of one of the store gates, parked with its backside towards the store. The back doors of the truck wide open.

"Wait a sec." I let go of Rika, and quickly run to the truck and climb up a few steps as I run up the truck's cargo box, grabbing the top of the cargo box and climbing to the top shortly after.

I then turn around and lie on the cargo box, extending my arm.

"Cmon." I glance around at the oncoming corpses as I speak. Rika nods and limps up to the box truck, grabbing my arm as I pull her up.

And seconds later, we were both looking at the sky, with our backs against the box's ceiling.

"Fucking hell..." I sigh as I finally relax. Rika just stayed quiet, before she started chuckling.

"Naier, can you do me a favor?" Rika speaks up as she keeps staring at the sky.

"What?" I ask back.

"Can you take a shirt from my bag and wrap it on my leg? My thigh is starting to feel a bit 'too' wet." She casually adds as she takes off her bag and gives it to me as she kept the pressure on her thigh. I just nod, take her bag and open it. Grabbing a random white shirt from inside.

I then slide towards Rika's leg and wrap the shirt around her injured thigh.

"Uhh, guess we will be stuck here for a bit now. Can't go bleeding all over the place." Rika gets to a sitting position.

"We need a basic first aid kit. Something to at least stitch the wound temporarily" I fold my arms as I speak.

"The house we were in had nothing. And whatever we had..." Rika lets out a sigh as she stops speaking.

"Is on the roof, I know." I continue after Rika...

But, that was not what was really worrying me right now.

"You feel fine otherwise?" I ask.

"Hmm? Yes, my thigh hurts like hell, but I've had worse." Rika shrugs.

(... Arrows, unlike bullets, are known to get dipped in poison. And infected saliva, would be a really, really bad poison...)

I glance at Rika then take a deep breath.

(How long did it take for Hihashi to turn? The anime had time skips in between...)

"Naier? You're staring pretty hard right now." Rika leans towards me as she speaks.

"Rika, do you know how long it takes for an infected person to turn?" I ask flatly. Rika blinks a couple of times, before leaning back off again.

"Hmm, from what we have been informed, anywhere between five, to twenty minutes." Rika answers calmly. And, after glancing at her thigh.

"You think the arrow might have been spiked?" She asks just as calmly.

"I don't know. But these guys did try to kill us. If they were smart, and ruthless enough. It could be a possibility." I answer as I sigh.

"I see. You, do have a point." Rika lowers her head slightly. Then, pulls the handgun I gave her.

"Comand also told us that saliva loses its infective properties as soon as it dries." She adds as she tilts her head.

"But hey. Look at the bright side, If I do turn, certain two girls won't have to worry about the 'perverded weirdo'." She chuckles as she slides me the handgun.

"You heard that huh." I answer as I glance at the gun.

"It was a bit too quiet. And I might have been a bit 'too' curious about what the pinkette wanted to say. Not that I'm that surprised to be honest." Rika chuckles.

"Just, do me a favor ah? If I do turn, make sure you go back into that house, and make sure that all these assholes are dead, really dead." Rika takes one of the cigarettes from her chest pocket, and lights it up. Then turns to look in the distance.

All we could do now, is wait.

Riverside pt2

"... Where, is he?..." I whisper as I keep scanning around the nearby street, kneeling on the top of the fence wall that was next to the house that we got ambushed from. The house that the fence I was on to my left. Or well, it's messy front yard.

"There's only one body here..." I sigh as I look at the remains of the bowman I shot some time go.

"Where's the fucker that shot Rika..." I narrow my eyes as I keep looking around...

(There is a lot of blood around, so I can't really make out if any of it is his. Hmm, no chance he could run away, his leg got shot. So...)

With a sigh, I get up. Take a few steps back, then dash forward and jump over the alley that separated the two houses, landing inside the yard of the hostile house.

The first thing I noticed, was it had several 'dead' corpses inside. The second was a trail of blood, leading from the wall next to me, and into the house through a full-body-sized window. Said window now closed.

"Hmm..." I silently walk up to the window, glancing inside.

"The trail keeps on inside" I whisper as I open the window, or well, try too. As it ended up being locked.

I groan as I take a step back.

(I can just smash the window, but if there are hostile people still inside, it will warn them. And these guys got the jump on us once. Not happening twice.)

I fold my arms and look around. Then, look up, spotting the open window that I shot the second archer from. The curtains still floating through it.

(That could work...)

I nod and take a few steps back.

The window was obviously too high up to wall run, but. There was a small room that extruded from the first floor a little further to the left, creating a small roof that I 'could' reach.

With a nod, I run up toward the wall of the outer room, and using the lip of the window on the wall, I climb up to the small roof. After that, I dash towards the open window to my right, jumping off the roof, and grabbing the lowers edge of the window.

Though. I might have gone a bit, too fast. As the momentum made my grip slip as I kept going forward.

(Shit!)

I quickly grab one of the flowing curtains and...

-CRRACK-

While the curtain did not rip, the pole it was attached to did not like the newly added weight. Causing it to detach from one side. What followed was that I found myself falling. Before a quick, violent stop. The curtain now slightly ripping from the force...

(Bah! So much about being silent...)

After hanging like a damn monkey on a pendulum for a few seconds, I start climbing up the curtain, finally reaching the window.

Before entering, I throw a quick glance inside. The guy I shot sprawled on the floor, his bow next to him, broken in two. Along with a couple of arrows, a pool of blood under him.

(Empty)

I nod and enter the building. They walk up to the body and check it.

"No pulse. As dead as you get." I whisper as I keep searching. Before turning it over and opening the bag it still had on it.

"... Uhh, nothing of use..." I groan as I glance at the broken bow.

(Did I end up shooting through the bow as well? Oh well, never took bow lessons. What with me being dead broke. I got no idea how to pull it without I dono, passing the arrow right through my thumb by accident.)

I sigh as I get up, ignoring the bow, for now at least.

With that, I ready my handgun and head towards the closed door ahead of me. The moment I reached it, I crouched down and open it. Then slide to the side and let it completely open while taking cover behind the wall next to it.

Once it was fully opened, I glance through. A wide rectangle hallway with two doors and a staircase. The staircase to my right was in the center of the hallway, one door adjacent to the staircase, the other door straight ahead of me. But most important of all.

(The blood trail goes up the stairs and into the room on the far end of the hallway.)

I take a deep breath and head next to the stairs, then glance towards the first floor, before turning towards the closed door to my left. And proceed to open it the same way I opened the last door.

Inside, ended up being the bathroom, bathtub on the far end. And while I was still crouched I could see a hand sticking out of said bathtub.

(Oh, ain't that just perfect.)

I pull my hunting knife and carefully walk towards the bathtub, standing up when I reached about halfway into the bathroom.

Inside the bathtub. A blond, long-haired girl, she couldn't have been much older than me, her eyes closed, her face extremely pale. Her clothes sticking to her body. As the bathtub was filled to the top with water, water had turned red. The reason? Several deep cuts on the girl's wrist. The bloody scissors on the lip of the bath showing the culprit.

(At least she died human, I guess.)

I throw a last glance at the girl before turning around, crouching down again as I head back to the rectangle room, closing the door behind me.

(The downstairs looked empty from the window below, so...)

I turn to the final door. Ready my handgun, and head to the door.

After stopping in front of it. I carefully turn the door handle, the moment the door was open slightly, I let go. Then used the handgun to open it completely, while at the same time aiming down the sights.

The first thing I saw, other than the blood trail, was the wall to the right, which was made of wardrobe doors, then, a window on the far end wall ahead of me. And finally, a bed that had its head rest against the wall to the left, the blood trail leading behind the double bed to my left.

I glance at the floor before silently entering the room. And then instantly head 'my' side of the bed, which instead of a nightstand had a dresser with a mirror on the far end. After getting next to the dresser I then lean down and look under the bed. Two legs visible on the other side, along with two hands resting on these legs, one hand holding what I think was a bow, the other, holding an arrow, a bag in front of the legs.

(Ok. Somebody is there, big chance the guy who shot Rika. He, seems to not be moving...)

I lean back up and look over the bed. Yet, could not see the guy, the bed was too high.

(Fuck it.)

I let out a breath, and climb the bed. Much to my surprise, the bed did not even creek. And now, I had a full view of the guy.

His head was bent down, swaying lightly. The hand that was holding the arrow was playing with the tip. And, very bloody, bandaged right leg. Proving he was the guy that shot, and got Rika shot.

(You bandages you little fucker?)

I silently moved right next to him, yet the guy didn't respond. Not that it's that surprising. He had a splintered knee considering the bandage location, must have hurt like a bitch. Plus all the blood loss...

Without speaking, I lean forward. Raise my hand, and quickly launch it forward at the guy's arm, the one holding the arrow. Before as quickly pulling back, lifting his arm up with a tight grip.

"Huh?! Wha..." The guy quickly turns to look towards me, only to find himself staring at the barrel of a gun.

"Sup." I motion with my head as I keep holding the guy's arm.

The guy's face turns into a scowl.

"Here to take your revenge for turning your friend into a zombie asshole?" His lips turned into a slight smirk as he kept looking at me.

"So you 'were' aiming for it huh. And yet I'm the asshole here." I narrow my eyes.

"Fuck y..." Before the guys could finish, I quickly lower the guy's arm on the bed, and press the gun against his elbow...

His eyes go wide as he sees my finger pulling the trigger.

"Wai!..." His shout getting cut short by the sound of a single gunshot, followed by a loud scream...

"Language..." I add as I push his now ruined arm off the bed, the guy hugging his arm as he leans against the wall to his left.

"Now, should I even ask why?" I ask as get off the bed, and kneel a safe distance in front of him.

"Ha, haha! Why not!? It's not like there are any rules left to tell us not to!" The guy spits on the floor in front of me as he shouts.

"So rules are the only thing that stopped you from being a monkey. Guess your other three friends must have been the same, seeing how they ended up." I just shake my head as I take the arrow off the bed. Then glance at the tip.

"Three? Math ain't your strong point hah? There were three of us, with me. Or did you go and off some random bystander by chance." As the guy spoke with a grunt, I picked the arrow he dropped on the bed after I shot his arm, dried blood visible on the tip.

(So there 'were' three of you. Thanks for the info douche-canoe)

"I take it you used infected blood huh?" I ask as I turn my sight back to him.

"Huahaaaauughh. A genius too ain't you." The guy scoffs as he winces.

"Smarter than you at least." I respond as I get up. Picking up his bag and glancing in to see an open half-used first aid kit.

"Since I know that blood itself does not carry the corpse virus. No idea about conventional illnesses though, so thank you for the first aid kit. My friend will need it more than you." I lift his bag slightly as I speak. The guy turned to look at me with a pained expression.

"Knowing that did stop you from shooting my arm though you fucking sadist!" The guy screams.

"Just because you're a damn retard and used the wrong fluid as poison, does not mean you did 'not' try to use it as a poison. Same deal to my eyes." I respond as I back off.

The guy just kept cursing, before folding over, guess he made a sudden movement that spiked his arm pain.

With a small sigh, I lift my handgun, aiming straight at the guy's head.

"H,hahh, really now?" He grimaces as he looks at the gun.

"Leaving loose ends is a good way to get you killed." I answer.

"Then why didn't just shoot me for the get-go you fucking sadistic fuck..." The guy hisses.

"I needed to vent..." I retort, and before the guy could respond, I pull the trigger. His head hitting against the wall behind him as he finally shut up for good. I casually throw the bag over my shoulder and turn to leave, leaving the door to his room open before heading downstairs.

(You know, I wonder what I would have done to Shimada had I not known that in the manga he was at least willing to try and redeem himself by sacrificing himself. Though the kid he did save was the reason everything went to shit in the first place...)

With that, I exit the building through the window door that I first found. After searching the kitchen and grabbing some packaged bars

consisting of energy bars and halva that is.

And, upon climbing the fence wall. I come face to face, with a large group of corpses. Corpses that had surrounded the house.

"What did I expect to happen, I shot a gun, twice..." I sigh as I look around.

(Hmm, guess I can use the same path as before with Rika, going towards the car wrecks while staying on the fence.)

I nod to myself and start to walk towards the back end of the house...

And less than a minute later, I was by the cars.

(Hmm, a lot of corpses are missing from the left side, which goes to the river, guess after they went on the main road they joined the other roaming corpses. Good for me.)

I quickly jump down and run to the road by the river. This time around, the road was, well, not so corpse free...

"Ok, without Rika here, I can just return the same way I came." I whisper as I run to the side of the road, passing the second bag over my shoulder after closing it. Then vault over the guard rail, but keep holding on to it, ending up with me hanging behind the railing.

(Steady now...)

I carefully grab the street under the railing, lowering myself even more.

(Ok, let's go before I stop feeling my fingers.)

Using the guard rail pylons that were embedded in the street as grabbing points, I start to 'pass' the street, throwing an occasional glance under me, towards the river.

While I was not exactly silent, the rail guard was about waist high for most corpses, so by the time they ended up leaning over it, I had long past em...

And like that, I reached the four-way intersection between my road, the bridge, the toy store, and the road that led to hell knows where.

Since I was still hanging off the edge, all I could do was grab on the road that headed to the bridge, so that's what I did, and I kept going. Until I reached the first Bridge support where the bridge arches started. Which in truth were my target from the beginning. Since corpses had no real way to get on the arches, and even if they did, they could not deal with slopes to save their unlife.

So, after climbing up to the arch and moving a bit higher from any unwanted hands, I look around me.

(Hmm, I could just jump on a car from here and dash to the back of the toy store...)

I nod to myself and get up, and with a stationary jump, I arc over the corpses that had gathered under me, and land safely but very loudly, on a car away from them.

Without wasting time, I jump down the car and break off into a dead run, straight towards the toy store's parking lot...

After trading paint with a few corpses, I finally reached the parking in the backside of the toy store.

(Uhh, shit, more corpses around the truck Rika is on. Most of them are dressed in storage worker clothes. Guess they came from inside the store?)

Rika was still casually smoking on the roof of the truck while staring at the sky.

(Uhh, the front of the truck does not have any corpses.)

I nod and run up to the front of the truck, then use the front bumper to quickly climb up. Rika, upon hearing the noise, turns around to find me halfway up.

"Huh? Why didn't you say you're here? Come on." She holds her cigarette with her mouth and slides to me as she extends her arm.

"You didn't hear me stomping about?" I ask as I get up with her help.

"Nope." She casually responds.

"That must have been a very interesting sky then." I shrug as I walk up next to her, then sit down.

"So?..." She asks as she glances at my new bag.

"The guy you shot was still alive." I answer.

"What? Please tell me you didn't let the fucker go." Rika's expression turns into a glare as she stared at me.

"I said 'was'." I respond as I open the bag. Rika just lets out a sigh as she closes her eyes, the glare leaving her face.

"He had already used some of this, but you might be able to use the rest." I add as I pull the first aid kit from inside. Rika opened her eyes to look at the plastic box

"Hmm, let me see that." She responds as she grabs said box.

She shuffled about a bit, before letting a displeased groan.

"No antibiotics here, only half a bandage..." She mumbles,

"... Ohh?" She then pulls a transparent empty vial. The label on it writing 'Morphine'

"Somebody had fun. Junkys?" I ask I fold my arms.

"Could be. It's not like you need Morphine if you get bit by one of these things..." She responds as she motions at the corpses below us.

"Still, we need something to stitch that or the bleeding stopped?" I ask as I look at her thigh.

"Nope, still bleeding. But this bandage will help with that. Or well, it will help better than a damn shirt at least sight it can get a tighter grip. So, help me out a bit here." She says as she gets up, takes off the now bloody shirt. And tosses it towards the corpses under us, one of them getting the shirt right into its face...

I don't know if it was the warmth of the blood, or the smell, but the corpse actually reacted and started, eating the shirt.

Turning my head back to Rika I find her. Stripping...

I blink a couple of times as she pulls her arms out of her overalls, then pulls her 'pants' down. Essentially staying in her T-shirt and her underwear. The whole thing would have had a very different, feeling. If she didn't have a bleeding hole in her thigh.

"Grab me the bandage." She casually extends her hand at me as she motions with her hand. I just nod and do as she asked.

She takes the bandage and quickly starts wrapping her leg.

"Plehh, did he really have to shoot me there, this better not leave an ugly scar. It's too close to my butt.." She mumbles as she finishes setting the bandage, then dresses up, well, almost dresses up. as she left her overalls unzipped.

"So, are you going to tell me if I'll live or turn into a hungry corpse now?" She asks as she sits down next to me.

"Well, they were ruthless, but thankfully for us, idiots. They tried to poison you with the arrow, but used corpse blood instead of saliva." I

respond.

"Ahhh, guess the pinkette ain't gonna rest easy yet." Rika chuckles.

"Though I do think we need antibiotics. Corpse blood is still blood from a decaying corpse. Other diseases still exist..." I continue.

"The kit did not have any." Rika answers flatly. I just sigh as I look inside the toy store's storage, spotting a forklift...

"Hmm, guess that place is all that's left. Areas with heavy machinery should have first aid kits by law." I point at the toy store's storage.

"I already told you. You are not going in there." Rika flatly answers.

"We can't risk having the wound getting infected." I respond.

"We don't know how bad it is in there. I was not spouting hot air when I told the pinkette that I'll bring you back alive." Rika repeats.

"I'll just search the place that is already visible. I won't go deeper. The last thing I want is to deal with literal ankle biters. Because you know, toy store and all." I say as I get up.

"Do I have to push you down? Sit your ass down Naier." Rika lifts her head to glare at me.

"Nope." I casually answer as I run off the truck, and jump into the building.

"Hey! Come back here you Hero complex moron!" Rika shouts as she slides to the edge of the truck.

I just wave at her as I look around the building.

From what I could see, which was not a lot because of the darkness and no windows.

About twenty meters from where I was standing, to my right, where most of the building continued, was pitch black darkness. The place had all the shelves against the walls, metallic vents running along the corners and ceiling of the room, the center was essentially a loading ground, some big boxes and forklifts scattered about, and that's that. T

To my left, on the wall straight ahead of me and to the far left side. Was a door that led into the front of the store. And finally on the actual left wall, two doorframes, each leading to a bathroom. Left being guys, right being females.

Also, next to the door that led to the main building. A first aid wall cabinet.

(Bingo~)

I grin as I run-up to the door, avoiding the corpses in worker clothes on the way.

After reaching the cupboard, I notice that the door to the front was slightly ajar.

Without thinking too much I grab the door and close it, then turn to look at the first aid cabinet.

I quickly open it and...

"... Bullshit..." I mumble as I look at the empty cabinet. I then turn to glance at the bathrooms...

(Bathrooms usually have first aid kits right? And this is a high-risk area so having two or three of these cupboards would make sense right?)

I glance towards the exit, Rika was not visible from here. Then glance at the bathroom doorways.

(... No door so still counts as, 'this room'... right?)

I take a deep breath and run towards the bathrooms. Opening my flashlight as it was getting a bit, too dark for my liking.

(Male or female? Female has more chance for female corpses, and as this is a warehouse, less chance for female workers. I also don't want to be in a tight space with a burly corpse man thank you very much.)

I nod and ran up the doorframe to the female side.

After a sharp turn to the right, a small corridor, and another turn to the left, I find the actual bathroom. The insides were just a long corridor, stalls to the left, sinks to the right, along with a wall made of mirrors over the sinks.

Also, all stalls were closed. And finally, right next to the first sink, on the wall, another first aid cupboard.

(God this better have something...)

I quickly run-up to the cupboard, fling it open. And...

It was full.

(Jackpot.)

Not knowing what to take, I just pick everything that looked like a bottle and quickly turn around.

Only to find that the door of the stall behind me had opened. A single, female corpse, dressed like a secretary. Wearing protective headphones, hair covering her head and neck, standing there, Unmoving, swaying...

(Oh holy f!)

I instantly freeze as I spot the ghost, I mean corpse...

And while still standing still, I slowly reach for the stall door with one arm, and lightly push it to close it. The corpse disappearing behind the now closing door...

(There go three years of my life...)

I let out a sigh as I turn to look at the exit. Then carefully head to the doorframe, and lean in to look at the corridor.

(Still empty. Let's get the fuck out, last thing I need is getting pushed back to a dead-end...)

With that, I exit the bathroom, and head straight towards the exit.

The moment I got near, I saw Rika with one hand holding a cigarette in her mouth, looking toward the inside of the building. She actually looked worried. Well until she noticed me, then she looked released, then annoyed.

"Get your ass up here you damn retard!" She shouts the moment she spots me, leaning over the edge and motioning with her hand. Three corpses under her trying to reach her to no avail.

"Are you 'trying' to get very corpses on us?" I ask with a low whisper as I run-up to the three corpses under her.

With the momentum of my run, I stomp the central one on the back, sending it into the truck's box. Then grab the second one before it could turn around, and yank it towards the third one before quickly grabbing Rika's arm and climbing back up.

And, the moment I was up.

-BONK-

A strong slap to my helmet.

"You intend to ignore everything I tell you?" Rika asks with a rather calm voice.

"Only the stuff that conflicts with what I want to do." I answer just as calmly. Rika just lets out a loud groan.

"I should have expected that the guy that is crazy enough to deal with the daughters of the two most influential men on the map at the same time is a hard-headed idiot." Rika sighs.

"I'll take that as a compliment." I respond as I start taking out the pill bottles. Rika turning to stare at them...

"Maybe I should just tie you up and carry you to the outpost." Rika folds her arms as she keeps looking at the bottles.

"... What's with people wanting to tie me up? I ain't even into that shit." I groan as I finish taking the bottles out of my pockets.

"If somebody else said that it proves my point even more." Rika answers as she picks a bottle.

"Or that you and that person have a weird bondage fetish." I shrug.

"Ehh, depends on the partner." Rika shrugs back.

(Figures she'd have tried that too...)

"... Antiseptic. I'm too lazy to strip again..." Rika mumbles as she picks another bottle.

"Ohh, antibiotics~" She then exclaims as she opens the bottle and pops a pill.

(I know I'm gonna regret that...)

"... You need to apply that antiseptic too you know." I point at the bottle she was holding before.

"You just want to see me in my underwear again don't you." Rika chuckles.

(Called it.)

"Just rip the pants and apply it." I shrug.

"You want to rip my pants? That borders sexual assault you know." Rika answers again.

"... Do whatever you want..." I groan as I let myself fall back with a groan, ending up with the sky taking over my field of vision.

It took a few minutes, till I heard clothes scuffling, and shortly after.

"Aaachhh, damn that stings!" Rika exclaims.

"Means it's working and you needed it." I answer.

"No shit Sherlock." Rika chuckles as she lies down next to me.

The only noise now being the corpse moans under us, plus the occasional bump as a corpse headbutted the truck.

A few minutes passed in silence like that...

"Hey Naier..." Until Rika speaks up.

"You hungry?..." She asks right after.

"Please don't tell me you're hungry again. You have been munching on something nonstop while we were at the house." I chuckle.

"Whaaaat, here I am trying to do a good deed to thank you. And you think I have ulterior motives? I am, so hurt right now..." Rika responds, though the tone of her voice, didn't sound 'too' hurt.

"What do we have?" I ask as I get to a sitting position.

"Nuts." Rika plainly responds.

"Nuts?" I ask again as I turn to look at her, only to find her still sprawled on the roof. Hands behind her head and overalls still fully unzipped.

"Enjoying the view?" Rika asks as she opens one eye with a smirk.

"What's with you women always targeting guys that are no longer alone..." I groan as I shake my head.

"Because the goods have been tested and approved." Rika laughs.

"Are you 'trying' to get Saya to orbital nuke us?" I ask as I fold my arms.

"Hmm? So you mean that the other one won't mind?" Rika chuckles as she also sits up.

"No, the other one will probably take matters to her own hands, you don't want the other one to take matters to her own hands." I answer as I shrug.

"Ohh, dangarus~" Rika chuckles as she opens the bag she filled with stuff from the other house. Then pulls a small plastic bag filled with mixed nuts.

"Ye... Wait a sec..." I frown.

"Did you just bait me in order to change the subject so you can just start eating again?" I ask as I fold my arms.

"Of course not~" Rika responds as she lifts both eyebrows, glancing at me as she starts munching.

"Do you always eat that much? I mean, hell, where do you even put all that..." I ask with a low tone.

(Considering your boobs and butt are actually smaller than Shizuka's, or Saya's...)

"Nowhere, did you forget my work commando?" Rika casual answers. I just take a deep breath and turn to look at the corpses under us, hands still extended, their blind stares aimed towards the sky.

(Well, her body does seem to match Saeko's considering they are both athletic, it could make sense. No way I'm telling her that though, it'd be like I'm handing her free ammo to shoot me with.)

"You sure you don't want some? These are some good nuts." Rika asks as she grabs the bag and extends it towards me.

"Well, never say no to free food." I shrug as I take off my headgear and gloves. Then grab a handful.

"Words to live by." Rika chuckles.

A few more minutes then passed in silence. If you don't count the sound of crunching, and corpse moaning...

(Hmm wonder what time it is...)

As we kept sitting, I took the expensive-looking watch out of my vest pocket...

(Almost eight huh...)

"Damn, that's a gaudy looking watch if I have ever seen one. Who did you steal it from?" Rika asks as she leans towards the watch.

"What makes you think I stole it?" I ask back.

"This brand's cheaper watch is more expensive than your Scar-H sweetheart. You're telling me you dropped thirty-four and four hundred thirty-four thousand Yen for a watch?" Rika chuckles.

"That's, a lot of numbers. And no, I didn't buy it, I didn't steal it. Or can corpse's file for theft?" I 'ask' back.

"To corpse cops." Rika chuckles.

"I better get ready to deal with corpse lawyers then..." I shrug.

"By the way, since you pulled it out. What's the time?" She asks back.

"Eight." I answer back as I pull the radio out and look at it.

"Hummm? Want to call you girlfriends?" Rika asks right after with a small smirk.

"Yes." I respond flatly.

"Ohh? I expected some sort of 'I'm focused on my mission' hard-ass approach." Rika tries to imitate a 'fat truck driver' as she speaks, only to end up laughing at her own joke.

"If they're worried about me five, I'm worried ten." I answer as I sigh.

"You know, speaking about it, it really got me wondering. What, exactly are you going to do?" Rika then relaxes as she leans on her arm.

"What do you mean?" I ask back.

"With those two. Sure, we might not return to 'normal' normal any time soon. But we are definitely taking steps towards a 'better' tomorrow. Restarting infrastructure, cleaning blocks, hell your little idea with the giant hole might even earn you a medal with how efficient it will be if we manage to pull it off. But what I want to know is what you will do if these two decide that it's time to, you know, make a decision." Rika shrugs.

"Honestly, I, don't know. I can't see myself denying either of them." I sigh.

"Oh come on, you must have a favorite~" Rika chuckles.

"No. It's like telling me to decide between ice cream and a cream cake. Both are equally awesome, and one can not replace the other." I respond as I drop my head.

"Ohh? Whos the cream cake?" Rika chuckles.

"Saya." I answer with a shrug.

"Hmm? How come?" Rika arches an eyebrow as she asks, though the smirk was still on her face.

"Simply because ice cream is colder, matches Saeko's cool personality better, the process of elimination." I shrug, again.

"Ha, so I guess she melts in your hands huh~" Rika chuckles before grinding at me again.

"You know, I'm thinking of betting that you can't last a day without shooting off sexual innuendos." I fold my arms as I turn to look at her.

"What? Oh come on, do you take me for some sex-crazed weirdo?" Rika frowns slightly as she also folds her arms. I didn't respond. I just kept staring at her...

"Ahh, my delicate feelings. To think that you'd think that I'm such a deviant." Rika closes her eyes puts her hand over her forehead as she turns her head away with a dramatic sigh. Actually, scratch the dramatic sigh, the whole essence was an overblown picture of dramatism.

"Yea, tell me about it. How did an outlandish idea even pop in my head. By the way, you lowered your zipper so much I can actually see your panties right now." I chuckle.

"Yiaw~ Pervert~" Rika tries? To play the embarrassed schoolgirl as she moves her zipper up just enough to actually cover her

underwear. Though with how she was smirking and trying not to laugh. She had failed, miserably.

"Uhh, I'm really surprised how nobody tried to actually rape you with how provoking you are. Seeing how half the survivors we found so far were drooling over at least one of our female team members." I sigh as I shake my head.

"Because the first guy that tried to get a bit too touchy-feely without my consent after I arrived at the airport. Ended up with two broken arms and three fractured ribs." Rika casually shrugs as she answers.

"... Why am I not surprised neither by the fact that somebody 'did' try it. And that he also ended up a vegetable..." I shake my head as I chuckle.

"Hey! He didn't turn into a vegetable. He could still walk, short distances..." Rika folds her arms as she leans towards me with a frown.

"Aaaanyway. Keep going?" Rika starts zipping her suit up fully up as she puts the nuts back into the bag.

"Can you walk?" I respond as I get up.

Rika, instead of answering, stands up as well, and leans on her injured thigh for a few seconds.

"I'll be fine. If that much was enough to stop me I'd be fired a long time ago." She adds as she starts getting ready.

"You sure? We can wait some more. It's not like we're in a time limit." I respond as I fold my arms.

"My, keep being this caring and I might seriously swoon over you. Or I might just take advantage of you and make you do all the hard lifting." Rika laughs, yet sits down again.

"By the way, since we will have to move sooner or later. How are we going to move? Other than the handgun, we're all out of ammo. And well, I might be fine with walking around, but close combat? One single wrong step can lead to a pain spike, and that could lead to me to the ground while a fugly is chewing my face off." Rika leans back while placing her hands behind her back as she asks...

"Hmm, yea. You will hold on to the handgun for now. We will aim to avoid combat. Hopefully, the outpost is not too far." I respond, then take my radio out again.

(Let's see if they are awake...)

I open the radio and press the speak button a couple of times. No reaction.

"Y'all still snoring?" I ask as I bring the radio closer to my face.

"Minus ten points in romantic wake-ups for you." Rika snorts.

No response.

"Can't be a ten at everything. Gotta leave some stuff for others to excel at." I chuckle as I close the radio.

"And you left out the only thing that some handsome playboy can use to steal your girl under your nose?" Rika laughs slightly through her nose as she tilts her head.

"Well if we are talking about the same type of playboy that comes to mind. Depending on how successful he is, his 'handsomeness' will equally decrease, in courtesy of me." I answer back.

"Ohh, violent~" Rika puts her hand over her mouth as she tries to act shocked.

And so, we spent about another half hour on the truck's ceiling.

Either with some small talk, or in silence. With me occasionally checking the radio...

"Hmm, didn't think they'd be sleeping for this long..." I tilt my head as I keep looking at the radio. The talk button still pressed.

"Maybe they're having a nice dream. You did tell them to sleep together did you not? Who knows what they could dream about~" Rika chuckled.

"I meant together in the same room..." I groan. As I let go of the button.

(Though if they did sleep on the same bed...)

I shake my head.

(Focus Naier...)

"Soo, should we..."

" *Naier?* " And just as Rika was about to speak, the radio spoke up. Saeko's voice...

"Saeko? Did I wake you up?" I ask.

" *No, I just returned to the room. Both me and Saya have been awake for an hour or so...* " Saeko responds. Her voice sounded rather, tense.

And then, silence...

"Saeko? Did something happen?" I ask as I lower my head slightly.

"*There, has been some events...*" She responds.

"... I don't think I'm gonna like these events." I sigh under my breath.

" *Electricity returned.* " She answers right after.

(Wait is that a bad thing?)

And as if to answer...

" *And, we will all be moved to the civilian camps.* " Saeko adds right after.

"Oh. Wait what?!" I shout back.

" *With electricity back. High-ranking officials are getting assigned here. Our rooms will be given to them. That is what Saya's dad informed us.* " Saeko answers just as calmly.

"So 'that's' all my work's worth huh. Fucking hypocrites, I'd like to see one of their fat lard politicians trek through damn a zombie horde for them..." I groan with a slight hiss in my voice.

"When will they move you?" I ask as I tap my helmet

" *The officials will start arriving the day after tomorrow.* " Saeko answers.

"And when will they move you?" I ask again.

" *They already moved us...* " She responds...

"God fucking. MOTHERFUCKERS!" I nearly tossed the radio off the truck as I shouted. Rika going wide-eyed as she stared at me.

" *Why, are you so scared about staying in a camp though?* " Saeko then asks back.

"It's not the camping that scares me, it's the lack of locks in your sleeping room." I respond as I let out a deep breath.

" *My sleeping room?* " Saeko asks again.

"Yes, your's, and Saya's. Or you wanna count times when the people we met thought with their dicks instead of their heads." I answer.

" Aren't you overthinking this though? You know I can defend myself. I'll make sure nothing happens to either me, or Saya. " Saeko answers back.

"I didn't know you could defend yourself in your sleep..." I say as I take a deep breath. Saeko, didn't respond.

After a few seconds of silence...

"Where is Saya?" I ask.

"She was with her father last time I saw her." Saeko calmly answers.

"Maybe, I shouldn't have told you about it. You sound anxious now." She adds right after...

"No, it's fine. Just means we don't have as much time to waste." I respond as I shake my head.

"But hey, look at the bright side. If we are sent to the camps, they can no longer force me to go anywhere. More free time." I add as I take a deep breath.

" That, does sound nice. " Saeko answers, letting out a small giggle, some tension in her voice disappearing.

(God, this was some fucking news I did NOT need. And with Rika telling me that the camps ain't exactly 'safe'. What with how they caught Captain fatso peeping multiple times, hell knows what else has happened there that has 'not' been mentioned...)

"Well, if worse comes around, we'll just up and leave. I'd rather have to deal with corpses and bandits. At least they can not push their weight around because of 'status'." I add with a groan.

" Hmm, if that is the case. I think there 'might' be a solution you might like. " Saeko answers.

"I'm listening..." I answer as I tilt my head.

"It's something my father seems to be thinking about. I can't exactly tell you what, since he has not actually told me so myself. But he seems to not be too keen on being overly dependent towards the army for his survival..." Saeko responds.

"I, see. Well, let's take things one at a time. First, I should focus on returning here before tomorrow. As I doubt they will have helicopters to spare once they start bringing in the nation's 'hope'..." I chuckle with a slightly sarcastic tone.

"And remember to pack up everything. Hell take even the damn curtains and if you can. Leave em four empty walls for all I care." I add right after, Saeko just chuckles at me...

"Ok, guess we got no time to lose. I'm closing the radio." I continue as I lower the radio.

" Very well. Just, be careful Naier. If something happens to you now because of what I told you..."

"Don't worry. Still got a full day ahead. It's not like the outpost is on the other side of the city, and we must be past the halfway point already." I cut her off. Saeko just responds with a 'hum' before I finally turn the radio off.

"... So much about not being on a time limit huh?" Rika adds as I sigh.

"I said it, I jinxed it..." I grumble under my breath as I get up...

(Hell knows I'm not leaving them alone in a camp where they caught Saya's stalker peeping. I'll swim my way back if I have to.)

Everything is fine

"This is you in 'no worries' mode?" Rika asks, glancing behind her as we kept going forward, her arm over my shoulder.

"Uhh, yes?" I ask back as I tap her arm, Rika lets go of me and I run forward, grabbing the single corpse that was with its back turned to us, then drag it to the edge of the road, and yeet it into the river below. After that, I draw my blade, and with the hilt, I hit the guard rail. Causing the rest of the corpses to turn towards me.

I then run back to Rika.

"This is the fifth corpse you sent swimming..." She whispers as she passes her arm over my shoulder, and we start moving again.

"It was in the way..." I whisper back.

"You also dropped kicked one of them into the river..." Rika retorts.

"It looked at me weird..." I shrug.

"And here I thought these things were blind..." Rika mumbles as she glanced at me.

It has been some time since we were on the move. And we had made some good distance. Mostly thanks to the handgun. How I knew we covered good distance? Well...

"The barricades ain't too far now, only one intersection left..." Rika then speaks up, pointing ahead with her free hand.

And, she was not wrong. The road further ahead had a tall barricade at the second four-way intersection by the river.

Well, ok, a three-way intersection, since the bridge on that intersection was blown clean off. There was also a military-grade,

hut-like structure on the side of the barricade, probably an outpost. And with the outpost being seemingly in the air, I guess the barricade had a catwalk behind it.

"God I hope that is an extension of the actual outpost and not another dud like the last bridge." I whisper.

"Don't jinx it..." Rika responds.

And soon, we were by the last intersection. The 'dead' corpses around here actually exceeding the 'alive' ones. Yet without wasting any time looking around, we entered the final stretch.

We, were about three-quarters past down the road, when...

"You two! Halt!" A voice shouts, and a soldier jumps out of the small outpost, aiming his rifle at us. Before turning to speak towards his shoulder, to what I think was a radio.

(Well, at least it's a soldier and not some fucking inmate with guns...)

Both I and Rika raise our arms.

"Who are you and what are you doing here!" He asks right after.

"Rika, you're the special forces cop here. You do the honors." I whisper. Rika just nods.

"Rika Minami. Stationed at the main airport. Also part of the special assault team sent to clear that airport." Rika answers.

"Airport? Far from home ain't you?" The soldier asks right after.

"We were on a recon mission via heli. Go an urgent request to support a Demo team after a nearby explosion while on our way back " Rika answers again.

The soldier then talks to his radio again. And, after a few more seconds, he finally lowers his gun, slightly.

"Story checks out. Where's the rest of your team? Or was it just the two of you?" He asks.

"K.I.A. Our roof got overrun by sky falling corpses from a taller structure next to us. Only me and he survived." Rika answers again as she points at me, lowering her hands. Me following suits shortly after.

"And him is?" He asks as he turns to me.

"Consc..."

"My boyfriend. Saved his butt when the outbreak started, made him join as a conscript to watch over that butt." Rika casually cuts me off.

"You did the what with the who in their where now?" I ask as I turn to her.

"Less time explaining compared to saying you're a civilian with special privileges." Rika shrugs.

The guard finally lowers his gun completely, turns around, and waves. The barricade next to him quickly opening. Revealing a, type 10 tank. It's turret aimed straight at us...

"Well, that's a kinder surprise..." I whisper as we start heading towards the now open barricade.

(Now I want a tank.)

Upon walking past the now open barricade, the tank's current turns to aim towards the blown bridge, said bridge had several soldiers near its edge, along with what I think were ladders that led to the river.

Other than that, behind the tank, was the road that kept going alongside the river. Said road was also blocked by a barricade. The road to our right though, which was a slight uphill, was not

barricaded, being wide open with several military jeeps parked on the sides of the road, and troops moving about.

The intersection also had several big containers scattered about. Some of them marked as fuel, others marked as MRE.

"Hmm? You're injured?" The man we spoke with some second ago speaks up as he jumps off the catwalk on the barricade.

"Don't worry, not a bite. We had a little, scuffle with a bunch of bowmen. One of them got a pot shot." Rika responds as she turns to look at her hip.

"Bowmen? Wait. These fuckers again?! God! Where did you find them?! A bunch of nutjobs with bows attacked a scouting party we sent out some days ago." The soldier frowns angrily as he speaks.

"If you keep going down that road you will find three of em by a house." I respond as I point behind me.

"Well, two. One is probably in several corpse stomachs by now." I add.

"You managed to get one of them? Well, that's some good news." The soldier folds his arms as he nods.

"Not, exactly. The other two are just not ripped apart. Don't think they will be going anywhere with that much lead in their heads though." I respond as I bring my hand to my temple and make a finger gun motion.

"Ohh. Well even better." The soldier just nods again in response.

"So who can we speak to if we want to get back to the airport?" Rika asks.

"Ohh, that'd be Major Mika. If you go up the road you'll end up by a store we use as a base. She is probably outside, in the planning tent

right next to the main building." The soldier points up the road as he speaks.

"Very well." Rika nods, and with a small bow, she turns to walk up the road.

And so, we started going up...

"You think they'll just give us a boat or something?" I ask as we keep walking.

"When did you ever get something of worth for free?" Rika chuckles.

(Figures...)

Upon reaching the next intersection, we came to a big opening. A medium-sized one-floor store to our left, and a rather big parking space surrounding it. The tent the soldier mentioned next to the store. All the roads around the store were blocked off with barricades, soldiers on these barricades, standing guard. while other soldiers in the parking lot were carrying materials around.

"Damn there are a lot of resources around here..." I whistle as I look around the premise.

"Wonder what they do here..." Rika asks as she casually walks up to a nearby open crate, and looks inside.

"These look military-grade, which means they were not scavaged, rather they were given from the army's current supply." Rika adds as she folds her arms.

"Don't see any helipads, or any real place a helicopter could land and shut down." I respond as I also fold my arms.

"So a boat is the best bet after all." Rika adds as she walks back to me..

"Think so. Cars and trucks are out the question." I nod, then pull out my radio.

"Gonna speak with them?" Rika asks as she glances at the radio.

"Yea, unless if you need me for something, 'girlfriend'." I respond with a slightly sarcastic tone.

"Yaw~ Keep telling me that, and I might just believe it." Rika chuckles as she essentially throws a punch to my shoulder.

"But no, knock yourself out. I can speak with that Major myself if need be." Rika then waves me away as she turns to look towards the main building, yet she didn't leave, still standing next to me.

I just nod and press the talk button.

"Anybody read?" I ask.

" *N, naier?* " A female voice responds. Saya's.

"Yea. I got you some good news for you. We managed to find the outpost. We're in right now." I respond.

" *O, oh. I, see...* " Saya answers, her voice sounding. Forced?...

(... That was, anticlimactic. Something's weirding me out here. I expected her to at least be a 'bit' happy about it. Did, something happen?..)

"Saya?" I speak up as I tilt my head.

"W, what..." Saya asks her voice sounding shaky.

"Are you alright?" I ask. Saya didn't respond for a few seconds.

"I'm, fine..." She answers flatly.

"That sounded like the least fine 'I'm fine' I've ever heard..." I respond as I take a deep breath.

"I said I'm fine. Don't worry about it..." Saya answers again, not really sounding any better than before...

(... Why I'm starting to have a really bad feeling about this...)

"Saya. Did something hap..."

"I SAID I'M FINE!" Saya loudly cuts me off, and then turns off the radio...

I, ended up just staring at the radio for a few seconds.

(... What the fuck, just happened?)

"... That, didn't sound good." Rika speaks up.

"No shit Sherlock..." I respond as I keep staring at the radio.

"We need to get back to the airport. Yesterday. I already get the feeling I might have to skin somebody alive in there..." I add as I keep looking at the radio, taking a deep breath as I try to calm myself.

"Naier." Rika then speaks up as she shakes my shoulder.

"I'll speak with the Major. Wait here." She adds as she turns to walk away.

"Think I'll flip off if the Major denies us transport now huh? Not, that far off to be honest..." I whisper as I keep looking at the radio.

And so, I spent the next ten or so minutes waiting, trying to get Saya or Saeko back on the radio, to no avail...

So in the end, I ended up sitting by the pavement, tapping my foot as I kept staring at that damn radio...

(Something happened. But what? She couldn't be 'this' distraught over the fact she got moved to the camp. Could she?...)

I close my eyes and let out a sigh...

(She didn't sound pissed, it felt more like she was upset, to put it lightly...)

"Hmm, that's some military-grade gear you got there. Mind I ask where did you find it?" A male voice then snaps me out of my thought. Turning towards the voice, I find a soldier. Asian in his Mid-forties. Staring at me. On his collar I could make out a mark of a single star and a line signifying his rank as a Sergeant. Next to him, a younger-looking soldier, looking to be around his, twenty to twenty-five.

(The soldier that let us in said our story checks out, so the demo team is stationed here right?)

"Might not look like it, but I was part of the team that provided support fire for a demo team that is supposed to be stationed here. In other words, I didn't steal it. If that was the question." I respond.

"My apologies. But, you said you were in the team that supported a demo team? Well my, in that case, I actually owe you a thanks." The soldier's attitude quickly changes, as he makes a quick bow. Then turns to look at the younger soldier.

"Uhh, you're welcome?" I respond as I tilt my head.

"You see. My little brother was in a demo team that just as happened to fuck up, primitively setting off one of their explosives. And apparently, they got back up from a passing by squad in a helicopter." The man responds. As he keeps staring at the younger soldier.

"I told you, I rigged everything fine. I don't know wh..."

"Cut your excuses, you charlatan! I don't care if the bombs were jury-rigged to blow by a handicapped alien squirrel high on crack! Your job was to make sure they were placed safely! And you failed! Almost killing your whole team!" The older soldier starts shouting as he raised his arms, as if somebody had just flipped a switch in him.

"Sorry..." The younger one just lowered his head apologetically, not trying to retaliate.

"Was it not for me, you'd have lost your uniform by now. " The older soldier groans.

"I take it, he was the reason things went boom?" I ask as I glance at the young soldier who seemingly had shrunken down in size.

"Indeed. It was my idiot brother here that caused all this mess. But, tell me something, why are you without your team, or outfit. Did, something happen? I might not be able to see your face, but you don't clearly don't seem to be all that well with how you are sulking on the pavement." The man asks...

(You know, I think it's better if I just take it off my chests...)

"Something did happen." I answer as I take a deep breath.

"My whole team, other than me and one more person got eaten alive, got run over while waiting for extraction. And now, while I'm stuck here twiddling my thumbs. I happed to get a rather uncomfortable call from my girl. The type of uncomfortable which makes you think that somebody might be trying to get in her pants. Without consent." I add as I slowly get up.

(Though she could just be in a violent mood swing cause she lost her favorite chair. Yea, positive thinking. It's not like half the fucking guys in this fucking town proved to be panting rapists. Oh wait...)

"So yes. I'm not alright. My team got chewed, I need to get back to the airport. And I'm stuck here." I continue as I fold my arms.

"That. I am sorry to hear about that. All, of that." The soldier's expression actually showed him to genuinely sorry about me as he spoke. Then, turns to his brother, his face turning to an angry frown.

"And now you see? The same guy that saved your ass. Might end up with his girlfriend getting fucked by some other guy because of you." The old soldier adds...

(... I tried my best to avoid saying exactly that. Thanks, now I feel even worse...)

"Uhh, yea. Don't fret about it. I needed to vent. Not like you can do much anyways." I sigh as I let out a deep breath.

The old soldier turned back to me and smiled.

"Actually, On the contrary, I might just be able to." He responds as he also folds his arms.

"... Elaborate?" I ask as I stare at him.

"As you can see, we are very well-stocked up here. With materials that we obviously did not scrounge from the nearby buildings. That's because we have convoys that come and go to the airport by boat. Either to transfer things we found like medicine and food, or to instead get missing supplies to this place. Such a convoy will leave in about, two hours." The soldier grins slightly as he speaks.

"While I am not going there in person. The people getting sent are essentially grunts. And, I just happen to be a Sergeant. If you could get the ok from our Major, which is the highest-ranking officer here, then I could just send you instead. She is by the tent next to the main building." The soldier raises his hands slightly as he looks away, seemingly acting indifferent.

"Isn't a Major a bit, too high up the ladder to bother about boat grunts?" I ask as I tilt my head.

"Indeed, but I'm already the second-highest-ranking officer under her right now. Yes, we are quite lacking. Since the lieutenants and captain we had stationed here got recalled to the airport yesterday." The old soldier answers.

Just as I was about to speak...

"Found new friends already? I honestly took you for more of an antisocial type." Rika speaks up as she walks up to me, waving her hand.

"Hmm? And you are?" The older soldier asks.

"The other survivor of the team." I answer.

"Ahh, so I should be thanking you as well miss." The old soldier bows again, then turns to his brother, and slaps him on the back of his head.

"Bow you imbecile, these people saved your life." He hisses before lifting himself up.

"Oh, oh right. T, thank you." The younger soldier quickly makes a bow, almost folding over from the speed he bowed.

"Uhh, I'm kinda lost. What gives?" Rika asks.

"The soldier that just got slapped was part of the demo team. You know, the one we helped escape?" I answer. Rika responded with an "Ohhh".

"Anyway, I got good news and bad news." She then essentially ignores the whole event and turns to me.

"The Major told me that they have boats moving back and forth with the airport. Something about restocking the place. And since she did read a report about a team not under her command supporting one of hers. And I might have noted to her that that same team got whipped while helping her team. She offered to let us on such a

boat. The bad news is, these boats are not normally made to carry very heavy loads. So they only let three people at a time, driver included. The next one leaves in two hours, and if we want on. We need to find the two extras tagging along." Rika continues.

(... Huh, the God is in this fucked up world really likes throwing breadcrumbs at me after stealing my whole fucking bread loaf. Just like a government now that I think about it.)

"Well, if we have the Major's ok then that settles it no?" The old soldier then claps his hands.

"Hue?..." Rika just tilts her head questionably.

"As I said to your friend if the Major agreed to change the people going on the boat. I can put you two on it instead of the ones we had set before. Hah, It would actually benefit us too. Fewer people on the return trip, more supplies on the boat." The old soldier laughs.

"Well, that was convenient." Rika chuckles.

"Tell me about it..." I mumble.

"So we need to find the other two dudes now?" She asks.

"Yes. Hmm. One is Arata Matsuda. A good kid, better than my idiot brother here who almost blew his whole squad up." He responds as he glances at his brother.

"He's one of our mechanics, so if you want to find him. Either look around the tank we have near the blown bridge. Or in the repair station we have set for our vehicles behind the main building. You can't see it from here, but it's a straight walk from here." He responds as he points towards the store with the major's tent.

"I see. I'm going to find him then." I answer as I nod, then take a few steps...

"Oh, very well. And do me a favor." The old soldier speaks up again, raising his hand at me.

"If you do return and find some smuck taking advantage of the situation. Give him an extra wallop from me!" He adds as he makes his hand into a fist.

"If that 'does' happen. And if he's still alive after I'm done with him. Then I'll make sure to pass the message." I respond, then makes a slight bow.

"Thanks. I mean it." I add before turning around.

"Who are you killing and why didn't you invite me?" Rika asks with a slight frown as she leans closer to me.

"The thing that might be bothering Saya. And I didn't invite you because I want to be a hundred percent responsible for all the damage done to it." I answer flatly as I start walking.

"Fair nuff." Rika casually shrugs as she turns towards the two soldiers.

And so, with my new target set, I set off.

First I went down to the tank. Mostly because I wanted to also get a closer look at that beast.

Upon reaching the intersection with the bridge. I walk up to the side of the tank. The armor plates on it splattered with dried blood and scratches.

(Corpses scratching rough metal? Ughh, I can already imagine their nails ripping off their fingers...)

I shiver slightly as I felt somebody tap my back. Turning around I find a soldier behind me. No rank on his shoulder.

"Please step away from the tank." The soldier flatly demands.

"I'm looking for one Arata Matsuda. Heard he is an engineer. Figured he'd be around the tank." I answer as I take a step away from the battle tank.

"Arata? Uhh..." The soldier frowns slightly.

"He is supposed to be on the next trip to the airport too." I add.

"Hmm, nope, does not ring any bells. But all our engineers are by the station behind the store. Just look for the truck skeleton behind the store, you'll probably find them creeping around there" The soldier then nods.

(First a tank, then the jeeps, now trucks? How did they bring all that crap here?)

With that thought, I turn to head back up.

By the time I was back to where I split from Rika and the duo, they were nowhere to be seen.

Nonetheless, I kept going towards the store. Then, I went past it. And the remainder parking lot comes into view. And as the soldier mentioned, two trucks also came into view. One was tripped down, only the chassis remaining, the other seemed to be reinforced. Probably with parts of the first truck. There were also several men working on both trucks. Some with blow torches on the chassis, others dismantling the parts of the stripped truck. While some were poking around on the reinforced truck. The truck actually resembled the modernized version of the type 73 Ougata.

(A herd of engineers...)

I glance around before I start heading towards the men by the stripped chassis. The sound of blow torches melting steel becoming louder the closer I got.

The moment I walked up to the nearest kneeling down soldier, and tap his shoulder.

The guy stops using the blow torch and lifts his welding mask as he turns to look at me.

"What?" He asks flatly as he eyeballs me from top to bottom.

"I'm looking for the person that is to board the next boat to the airport, Arata Matsuda." I respond.

"Why?" The guy asks just as flatly again.

"I'm going to the airport instead of him." I respond with the same flat tone he had.

The guy stares at me for a bit, before turning towards the reinforced truck.

"Rata! Some guy wants to speak with you!" He shouts as he waves towards the guy that was sitting on the truck's driver seat, who was fiddling with 'something' on the steering wheel.

The guy on the wheel raises his head, then leans out the window.

"What?!" He shouts.

"This guy wants to speak with you!" The man next to me shouts again...

"Whaaaaat?!" Arata shouts back, again...

(I don't have time for this...)

I tap the guy next to me, so he notices me as I walk past him, and head to Arata.

"I'm taking your place on the boat to the airport." I speak up as I stop under the maybe deaf man, next to the driver's door.

"No can do, the truck's electrics are busted, I need to go in person to get the replacements." He responds as he shakes his head.

"Write them down on a paper. I need to be back at that airport before sundown." I answer.

(Also I also got the Ok from people higher rank than you so your opinion matters as much as a fart. But sure, let's play ball...)

"Even if I do, will you know what cable is for what?" He asks back as he keeps leaning on the door's open window.

"No, but somebody in the airport will." I answer again.

"Uhh, look. You know how long it'll be before I get another chance to go there if you get something wrong?" He groans.

"Then make sure you write them down clearly. Or you mean to tell me that the engineers in the airport don't know the difference?" I respond.

"Why bother a random mechanic for something I can do myself?" Arata narrows his eyes slightly as he leans out of the window even more.

"Look, buddy. My whole team minus two people just got wiped because a 'random guy' you got stationed here fucked his job. Now I'm stuck here while the group I'm responsible for in the airport is paying the price for your team's fuck up. And you're worried about bothering a random engineer? Also, I already got the ok from your Major, and the Sergeant." I narrow my eyes as I tap my foot.

"Wow there, no need to start biting. I'm just saying. I'll write you a list and bring it to you before the boat leaves if it's that important. Ok?" Arata leans slightly away from the window as he speaks. I just nod as I turn to walk away.

"No need to be an ass..." Arata whispers right after as he leans back inside the truck.

(Let's see how you would react if you were in my place...)

I groan under my breath as I leave towards the tank once again...

-A few minutes later-

By the time I was once again down there, I found that something had changed. To be more precise, a couple of soldiers were by the bridge, in a line, holding a rope and pulling something up. That something, ended up being a wooden crate.

Tilting my head I walk up to the edge of the bridge and look down, a boat now parked under us. It's chassis reminding of a 55 defiant.

(Huh? Is that military-grade?...)

"Nice boat huh?" A female voice speaks up right next to me. Turning to the voice, I find Rika also staring down as well.

"Rika? Found your replacement?" I ask.

"Yep I'm all set, you?" She asks back.

"Yes, guy was a bit reluctant to give his spot though." I shrug as I keep looking down.

"Really? Mine essentially thanked me..." Rika chuckles.

"Still, I wonder how a tank, two trucks, and several jeeps ended up here." I sigh as I lean back, then turn to look at the tank.

"Oh, they were here before the E.M.P. blast. They also had one more tank. But it's at the bottom of the river right now. The trucks and jeeps essentially got fried, tanks were still functional but, the one that was on the bridge had an inside incident. The driver turned mid-battle, killed everybody inside. They had to blow the bridge with the

tank still on it. It got overrun before they could retrieve it." One of the soldiers that were pulling the rope speaks up as he walks next to the edge, then sits down, his hands dangling over the edge. He then pulls a cigarette pack from his pocket. Not bothering to turn to look at us as he spoke.

"That, must have been one expensive failure." Rika whistles as she looks towards the river again.

(Tank of the lake huh... Uhh, yea not working, I still can't stop thinking about Saya. And, now I have to wait...)

I sigh slightly as I pull my radio again, giving one last try to contact the girls, to no avail...

Count your fingers

You know, was it not for the fact that I could not keep calm. This would be a really nice moment.

The sea without a single wave, letting the boat almost glide over the water without a single bump, letting me sit in the front part of the bow without getting tossed all over the place...

But I, had other problems to deal with...

"Still no answer?" Rika asks as she sat next to me.

"Nope. Nothing. Why did she shut the friggin radio off..." I respond with a sigh.

"Uhh, I don't know..." Rika sighs back as she scratches the back of her head.

"Ahh, the first time you could use my help. And I'm useless." Rika drops her head as she speaks.

"Unless you know teleportation magic, there ain't much you can help with." I respond as I pocket the radio.

"I know. But I honestly never seen you be this, out of it. Ever. And you managed to keep a level head when our damn roof got swarmed." Rika answers as she turns to look at me.

"You know what they say, waiting is the worse part. And this whole shitshow is just, waiting. I can't do anything, just wait, and hope. And up until now I never relied on hope and luck, don't intend to start now either." I groan as I hit the back of my head on the boat's railing.

"Guess the strategy of going after somebody's loved one if you can't take them down is really as efficient as they say..." Rika mumbles as she turns to look ahead of her.

"If you want to have that individual you can't kill come after you in a frenzied rage. Then yea, go ahead. But you'll have nobody to blame but yourself when your family is set on fire..." I respond.

"Are you going to do that?" Rika asks right after.

"If somebody touched Saya while my back was turned? I don't know what I'll fucking do..." I take a deep breath as I close my eyes.

"Nothing good though. I can guarantee that." I add as I open my eyes, then turn to look towards the boat's bow. The airport's silhouette visible in the far-off distance.

"Also, if you want to help. Then take my workload after we dock. Don't think I'll be able to sit around and carry crates after we touch the airport..." I add with a sigh. Rika just nods at me.

"Come on, everything will be fine. Didn't you tell Saeko to watch over them?" Rika then asks.

"So you 'do' know their names." I arch an eyebrow as I turn to her.

"Huh, of course I do. Why would I not?" Rika asks back.

"You never called them by their name?" I respond.

"Ehh, habit, Didn't I call you commando all the time too?" She asks back.

"Huh, I guess." I shrug as I turn to look towards the airport again.

(I did most I could without me being there. I warned Saeko to stick close to Saya. So, if something happened to Saya, it would mean that they either managed to get past Saeko, or that Saeko let them get passed. One sounds worse than the other...)

I shake my head and close my eyes.

(No, instead of thinking about what happened, think of what you will do.

I mean for starters, the only person I know that could be after Saya, was the general. But, it'd make no sense. Saya is still a Takagi. If he got caught raping Souchiro's daughter, he would stand to lose too much. And everybody got sent to the camps today. So it's not like he had the chance to creep in at night yet. But, the camps have a lot of people, and the people there, maybe they don't have anything to lose...)

I stop thinking and open my eyes, then look at the sky.

(Fuck, no matter what I think, it always brings me to think the worse. I'll just, stop thinking...)

With that final thought. I kept staring at the sky, trying to keep my mind empty...

Otherwise, I'd go nuts...

And so, time passed, the sound of the boat cutting the sea being the only sound, the cloud slowly moving over my head...

-Almost an hour later-

You know, I didn't even realize that sitting outside meant that my clothes would sooner or later get soaked in seawater, thank Rika I left my equipment in the boat's cockpit for that...

"Your sleeve is moist." Rika speaks up after walking up to me, and pokes my sleeve.

"Seawater." I respond as I keep staring at the sky.

"And here I thought I would catch you crying." She chuckles as she kneels down.

"Sadness usually comes after rage. I'm not even at the rage part yet. Yet..." I respond as I take a deep breath.

"Well, keep a level head. You can't do anything if you're dead. Remember that. Because we're here." Rika shakes me and points ahead of me...

I was about to lift my head, but, I didn't need to. As a big bridge blocked my view towards the sky.

A bridge. The bridge that connected the airport to the mainland...

"We're here..." I let out a deep breath as I start getting up, Rika folding her arms next to me.

"You know where the camps are?" She asks.

"Yes. No idea where Saya or Saeko is though. If they're still there." I respond.

"Where else would they be?" She motions with her head to follow her, then proceeds to head towards the boat's cockpit, where our equipment was at.

"Dono, locked in a room getting gangbanged." I answer flatly.

"Oi, that's nasty, even for my tastes." Rika shakes her head as she grabs my gear, then throws them at me.

"Besides, you mean to tell me your little samurai just gave up and let some random smuck have his way with her." She asks right after.

"Saeko is strong, but nobody can hold off a mob that has surrounded you." I answer as I start equipping my stuff.

"Then stop thinking like that. And if it comes to it, then just burn the whole place down." Rika shrugs as she speaks, while in the meantime the boat driver turned to look at us. I just glanced at the driver as he eyeballed us, and turned to leave.

(Burning them, it's not painful enough.)

And just as we exit the boat's cockpit room, the boat touched concrete...

We had arrived. The airport landing strip ahead of me, along with the aircraft carrier, the bridge to my right.

"I take it you will cover for me?" I ask as both me and Rika exit the boat.

"You got it, go." Rika nods. Then waved towards the guard that headed towards us.

Me? I turned to head straight towards the bridge...

Needless to say, it didn't take too long for me to essentially start running...

Reaching the bridge didn't take too long, thankfully with no guards stopping me.

(The camp was next to the main building, was it not?)

I nod to myself as I stop running, since there were a few guards standing guard at the bridge's barricaded entrance. A barricade made of metal fences and jeeps.

The moment I walk up to the guard...

"Don't tell me the bridge is blocked off or something." I ask as I glance behind the guards.

"Nah, but with all the bigwigs arriving here. We had to increase security. You just arrived in that boat with Minami did you not? You must be the guy she worked with to clear the airport then. Wana pass?" The soldier asks.

"Uhh, yes." I reply flatly. The soldier nods and opens a door on the metal fence.

(Am I famous or something?)

"Just be aware, the main building is now off-limits, especially since you are armed and I don't see any visible rank on you" The soldier adds as he motions me to pass.

"Noted, I am heading to the camps anyway." I respond, the guard just nods back.

And so, I moved past the bridge. Exiting the other way was not that hard, the guards on the other side essentially let me out without even looking at me.

And now, I was with the main building to my right, and next to that building.

(You two better be alright, for everybody else's sake...)

I take a deep breath as I start heading towards the camp.

(Because I don't have enough bullets to kill everybody here. And the corpses outside probably won't mind a free lunch...)

Once I was outside of the camp, I stopped...

(... Now, where...)

"Naier?" I didn't even manage to finish that thought when a male voice spoke up.

Turning around, I found Takashi, Rei next to him. Both with bags on their shoulders.

"Takashi? Do you know where Saya and Saeko are at?" I ask as I point behind me, towards the camp.

"You know they dumped us into the camps? You were not here when it happened." Takashi asks.

"Yes, I found out by radio. So, do you know where they are?" I ask again.

"They put us all in the newcomer section, to the left..." Takashi responds, his expression turning what I can only call disgust.

"I see, left is a big place though." I respond as I glance at all the left part of the camp.

"Uhh, they should be, twenty tents into the left, then about another twenty, or thirty up, that's where my and Rei's tent is at. I'm sorry I can't tell you exactly where the others are. I have been in Rei's dad's cell with Rei ever since he woke up. We were actually going there again just now, we just came here to get some food. We didn't even leave out stuff yet..." Takashi responds as he motions to his bag with his head, Rei, just glanced at Takashi before turning to look at the ground.

"I see, I should get going then." I quickly turn around and enter the camp.

"Hey! Did something happen?" Takashi asks as I turn my back to him.

"We're going to find out soon enough." I answer as I keep walking, stealthily pulling my hand to check how much ammo I had left.

(Five in the mag, one in the chamber, Scar is empty. Huh, maybe that cell is the safest place you can be Takashi...)

With that, I turn left, and start walking...

Into a dirt path, tents sets in lines on either more dirt, or on grass patches, with people sitting in, next, or around them, some gathered

in relatively big groups in small openings, others walking around seemingly aimlessly.

After walking past was I think was twenty or so tents, I turn to look to my right.

(I don't see them anywhere, I don't see the rest of the group either...)

Just as I was about to move, some random dude dumped into my shoulder, casually walking past me as he kept speaking with another guy next to him...

(I am fucking invisible you fuckwit?)

I reflexively pat my pockets and check for my knife and gun...

(All there.)

Just as I was about to turn towards my right to head up. I saw it, I pair of pink twintails, passing by some tents, and turning to walk on the main road to my right.

Wearing a white jacket, and a school skirt, along with pink shoes. Her head lowered, an M.R.E pack in each hand.

(... Saya?)

I tilt my head, and start following the girl, trying to not lose eye contact with all the people passing through.

Before I could manage to close in enough though, she stopped by a tent, opening it slightly and looking inside, and then, I managed to see her face. That, was Saya.

(At least she's not locked in a room.)

I let out a small sigh as I start walking towards her.

Noted on the, stared. As the moment Saya got back up, after leaving the M.R.E and closing the tent. Three men, which were sitting a little bit further ahead by another tent, got up and casually walked up to her, one of them lifting his hand to wave at her.

Before she could react the men were essentially around to her, the guy that waved at her with his back towards me...

(... You three are getting too close. And I'm starting to see red here.)

I take a deep breath and start walking up towards them. The guys looked to be around middle-aged, thirties to fifties...

(Now, don't rush. Only five bullets left, you don't want to shoot the wr...)

I had not even managed to finish that though...

"Don't touch me! Leave me alone!" Saya shouts out as she takes a step back. And the response was, that one with his back turned to me, which was essentially right next to the pinkette, casually brought his hand to her rear, and gave it a strong squeeze.

Saya let out a small yelp before slapping the guy's hand away, then tried to plant her other hand on the man's face. The word being tried. As the man easily caught her arm by the wrist, having that, Shido-like smile on his lips.

Have you ever had a moment, where you could no longer hear? Where your ears could only hear a constant ringing, like a flashbang just went off next to you?

Where you wanted to kill somebody so much that just killing them didn't feel enough? That you wanted to make them suffer, a lot...

That, was exactly how I felt at that moment. That, was the reason that instead of just drawing my handgun and emptying the remaining

clip, I walked up to a nearby tent, a tent with utility tools scattered about, and picked the first, solid steel hammer I saw...

Yet, the moment I turned to head towards them again, they had backed off. Why? A certain purple-haired girl was standing in front of Saya, her hand on her blade's hilt, a bunch of blankets on the dirt next to her...

The men just lifted their hands up with a sickening smile and turned to walk away, towards the opposite direction from me. Acting as if nothing ever happened...

"Keep that feeling in your hand. It ain't gonna feel for much longer..." I hiss under my voice as I quicken my pace.

As I closed in to Saya and Saeko...

"Are you alright?" I hear Saeko ask. Saya just nodded as she hugged herself.

"I can't take it anymore. Why are they doing this to me..." Saya mumbles as her sight turns towards me, tears on the side of her eyes...

"That, is a really good question." I speak up as I walk up next to them

"H,huh? N, Nai..."

And at that point, I had walked past the two, closing into the trio...

"Man if your wife finds out..." The rightmost guy chuckles.

"She can piss off, I can do whatever I want. Besides, what's she gonna do? Leave? I'm the only reason she's not eating scraps like the rest of her kind. But stiiiiiiilll, man, it's a shame 'he' told us can't we fuck this one before him, I know he wants 'first round'. But these butt-cheeks make me so hard it's almost unbearable." The middle

man, aka the groper, responded with a cackle as he brought his hand between his legs.

"Oh, poor you. Guess I'm not going to completely kill you if you are suffering 'this' much." I growl as I walk up behind mister grabby fingers. The guys stop walking and turn towards me.

"Huh? Who the fuck are you? Do you know who aaaiiii!..."

The guy didn't even finish his sentence, when my boot made a perfect fit, right between his legs.

"The fuck?!" The second of the men shouted as he charged towards me.

Only to end up barreling out of control as I sidestepped, grabbed him by the arm, landed the hammer at the side of his head, then hurled him towards the nearby tent. With how heavy the hammer felt, being metal from top to bottom, I wouldn't be surprised if his jaw was now in pieces.

The third one, had actually pulled a knife.

"Who the fuck you think you are?!" The guy shouts as he points the knife at me. Taking a big step towards me.

"I'm Batman." I reply with a shrug as I pull the handgun.

"Lethal weapons now?" I 'ask' as I undo the safety and wave the handgun, the other hand still holding the hammer.

"W, wow. Let's not be hasty now." The guy drops the knife and lifts his hands up.

"The only hasty thing here is how quickly you guys decided that my girl's ass is public property." I respond as I aim towards the guy, who with a shriek, turned and started running...

(... I forgot batman does not use lethal weapons. Guess I'm Alfred now. Also, didn't you see the scar's barrel sticking out my back you blind fuck?)

I switch the safety and turn around, the first guy still on the floor, the second still in the tent...

Saya and Saeko staring at me a little further down. But, there was one problem...

I was still, pissed...

So, I walked up to the guy who cupped a feel, who was still lying sideways. And kneel over his neck.

"On your finger scale, how good was my girl?" I hiss push his face against the dirt.

"Ugh! You just did a grave mistake kid! Do you know who I..." Before the guy could finish, I grab his hand by the wrist, using my knee to step on his shoulder, forcing him to turn belly down.

I then lean towards his ear as I slam his hand on the dirt.

"Go ahead, tell me who you are. Because I honestly expected somebody else to try and pull a short on me. So tell me, who are you? Tell me so I'll know who's guts I'll have to feed you." I cut him off as I ready the hammer.

"And, I didn't do that grave mistake." I add as I lean back, and raise the hammer.

"Yet..." and bring it down, on the index finger of the guy's hand.

What followed was a bloodcurdling scream from him as a sickening 'crack' echoed from his finger...

Which then got followed by another, and another, and another, and another, and another, and another...

Up until his hand didn't even resemble a hand anymore.

"You know, I wonder if that'll be permanent. It needs to be permanent. You think it'll be permanent?" I 'ask' as I look at his mangled hand while taking a deep breath, the guy's response was some incoherent mumbling, before he started shouting again. Probably because I poked his hand with the claw part of the hammer.

"Well, better make sure..." I add with a shrug, drop the hammer, and pull my knife.

"Did you know? One of my girls is an extreme sadist, think she's rubbing off on me." I whisper as I raise the knife, and then bring it down to the guy's middle finger.

I don't know if it was because he was already screaming, or if all that hammering had numbed his hand, but he didn't scream any louder after the blade severed his finger. I think...

I then grab his face by pushing his cheeks together, essentially to shut him up, and I lower myself to his ear.

"Now, I'm going to ask you a question. And you better answer, or I'm going to be chopping fingers till there are no fingers left. What, did you do, to Saya." I whisper.

I then let go of his cheeks.

"Fuchhk you! Fuck you fuck you fuck you Aaaaargghh! I'm going to fucking kill you! I'm g..."

That sentence was not finished, and he was one finger shorter.

"Second time. What, did you do, to Saya." I ask once more as I grab his face again.

"..yuuuu" The guy mumbled.

"Another finger then." I tilt my head slightly and shrug, and as I lift my knife...

"Aggh! N,nothing! I did nothing! I didn't do anything! I just grabbed her ass!" The guy screamed as he stared at the knife.

"Oh. Ok..." I let out a small sigh as I glance at him.

Then bring the knife down anyway, and now he was three fingers short.

"That's for grabbing her ass then. You're lucky I have more important stuff to do, so, don't go anywhere, I ain't done with you yet hombre." I respond, wiping the knife on the guy's now dirty shirt, then get up as I pick one of his severed fingers. Throwing a glance at his friend in the tent, who has still out cold. As for the rest of the camp, essentially everybody was looking at me.

"What?! Did I disturb your fucking sex show?!" I shout as I raise my arms, a couple of the civilians turning to look away.

"Sitting on your asses and doing nothing while a girl almost got raped in front of you." I add before I toss the finger at the guy's friend. Then turn to look at the guy who was now on the floor in a fetal position, hugging his two-fingered hand.

But honestly, it still didn't feel enough. This is why before turning to head towards Saya and Saeko. I take a final swing at the guy's mouth with my boot, really hoping that that force was enough to kick his damn teeth in.

(You know, I'd be funny if this guy really didn't do anything else. But I highly doubt that. Now with how he seemed to 'know' Saya..)

After letting out a long sigh, I turn to head towards the two girls.

"Sorry I didn't manage to get here faster..." I calmly speak up as I put my hand on Saya's shoulder and give it a light squeeze.

"I, it's ok..." Saya just shake her head, her eyes locked at her feet.

"Alright, you know what I'm going to ask. What the hell happened here?" I ask. Saya nodded slightly...

"He approached me the moment we got here. Telling me that he can 'help me' if I went with him." She mumbled.

"After that, he wouldn't leave me alone..." She continued as she tugged her shirt.

"First time he got grabby feely? Or..." I ask as I glance at the guy, still squirming at the floor.

"Once more, Saeko stopped him back then again..." Saya answers as she glances away.

"So he lied, figures. The army is just letting gropers and rapists run around?" I ask as I sigh.

"We have not seen a single soldier in this side of the camp, other than the ones that handled food. And they mostly protect the food, not us." Saeko responds.

"What you mean 'this' side of the camp?" I ask as I turn towards Saeko.

"It is, essentially separated in sections. The wealthier people and the ones that can offer a service, like mechanics and doctors. Are on the other side of the camp. Which is separated from this part, and are not allowed in there. Here are the new arrivals and people that just, exist." Saeko answers...

"Should I guess where he's from?." I ask as I point at 'two fingers'.

"Not from this side." Saeko answers as she folds her arms.

"Maybe I should chop another finger off..." I start pulling my knife as I turn to walk towards him. Only for Saya to grab my arm with both

hands.

"P, please don't leave..." She mumbled. In all honesty, she looked to be on the verge of tears...

"Who exactly is he?" I ask as I turn to Saeko.

"I don't know. But I know he didn't target only Saya. And that he is among the 'privileged' even among the people in the other part of the camp. I saw him talking with the general a couple of times. The one we met when we first got here." Saeko responds.

(The fatass ogling Saya general? Bird of a fucking feather huh? My two bits that that 'he wants first round' bit was him...)

"He went after you too?" I ask, Saeko shook her head.

"Miyamoto. Though he and posse stopped the moment Takashi showed up. And, I think they refrained from trying to move on me after they found that I know how to use this." She says as she glances at the man, then lifts her katana slightly.

"So they waited for you to not be around..." I sigh as I let out a small breath.

"I got careless. Went to get some blankets for the night." Saeko nods slightly, then turns to look at the now dirty blankets.

(... You intend to sleep a single fucking night in here?)

"Saya, they didn't do anything else did they?" I ask. Saya just looked away.

"Saya." I speak up again.

"The first time, he came alone. I, ended up slapping him because he groped me back then too. And he got violent. Pushed me into a tent and tried to tie me up. Saeko heard me screaming and got to me. She smacked him around before he could do anything. He then

started screaming that he got attacked. The camp, took his side, because 'nobody heard anything' and 'I was overreacting' when I said that the asshole tried to rape me." Saya whispers.

"Which is sadly not that surprising, since he knows someone this high up in the army. People think he will help them if they butter up to him. " Saeko continues.

"If he's this high up, then why the fuck is he in the camp..." I groan as I glance around us.

"You can't hunt if you are not in the hunting grounds. His words." Saeko responds.

"I don't want to stay here..." Saya adds as she finally lifts her head, the tears that were swelling up the corner of her eyes now running down her cheeks.

"Fucking hell..." I sigh as I pass my free arm around her shoulders, since she was still on a death grip on my other hand, and push her on me. Throwing one last glance at the guy that was sprawled on the floor, swimming in a mixture of his own blood, spit, and dirt.

"As much as I want to make a banjo out of this guy's tendons, we need to have an exit plan first, if he's in cahoots with that fat general and I kill him here, it'll be too easy for him to get us nailed to the wall. Anyway. There is something else I need to ask." I whisper.

"Why the crap did you close the radio after yelling your lungs out? You know it had quite the opposite effect of not making me worry..." I ask.

"I, I didn't close it..." Saya quickly looks up to me, before lowering her head again.

"Uhh, what?" I ask.

"We have no electricity here. I forgot to charge it at my, at the hotel room. I didn't notice the charge, up until the moment it shut down.." She adds with a mumble.

"And here you were telling me to be careful with the radio." I chuckle as I ruffle her hair.

"Sorry..." She whispered, her head still lowered.

(I expected people to be animals. But the same fucking day they went to the camps? In broad daylight? I'm just glad I warned Saeko to stick close to Saya beforehand, and that she didn't decide to 'get rid' of the competition by doing nothing. Or that I didn't take long enough for them to manage to overpower both her and Saya...)

"Uhh, Naier. I think we better move. Now." Saeko then moves closer to me and whispers. Turning to look at her. She then motions with her eyes towards two guards in the distance. Speaking with the guy I threatened with the handgun.

"Shit. Come on, let's go.." I put my hand on Saya's back and push her slightly. Saya just nodded and let go, well almost let go, she had that death grip on my arm.

With quick steps, we started moving towards the exit of the camp. And, right after we started moving, people who were up until now watching from inside their tents. Moved towards the middle of the road, where mister grabby fingers-less was at. Essentially blocking my view towards the guards, and at the same time, blocking the guard's view towards us...

"I. I didn't want to tell you what happened, because I didn't want you to worry. But, I was scared. I was scared that they would come back with more people to get us both. I, I didn't know what to do..." Saya whispered with a snuffle.

"Your parents did nothing through all of this." I ask as I tilt my head, finally reaching the end of the camp. Saya shook her head.

"Ever since the politicians started arriving, I have not seen them. And they won't let us in the main building either..." She answers.

"God we might be better off out of here after all..." I whisper as I glance behind me, thankfully nobody seemed to be following us.

"Saeko, you told me your dad had a plan or something he wanted to speak about?" I ask as I glance at Saeko, then start walking again.

"Yes, and considering our current situation. I take it you want to speak to him as soon as possible." Saeko answers.

"I want to gauge our options. Because come nightfall, I'd rather be outside in an empty house, rather than there." I respond as I motion my head behind me.

"I see. Should I pack up? Just in case?" Saeko asks back.

"After we meet your father. Which, I have no idea how you will do since we can't enter the main building." I shake my head.

"I'll ask one of the guards outside. If my father calls us in, we should be able to enter." Saeko responds. And like that, we start moving towards the main building...

(... I know leaving them here was supposed to be the safe option. But that is no longer an option.

Uhhh. God now I really wish I left some permanent disability on that fucker, just three fingers ain't nearly enough for what he did...)

[Damn guys. You're lucky I had most of this chapter prewritten along with the last chapter so I could rush it seeing how nuts the reviews were getting, I almost got the feeling that some of you actually wanted Saya to get N.T.R-ed. Welp, Saeko just cockblocked ya or she just cockblocked herself? Now if you excuse me, I have to finish a friggin 3d monstergirl model for tomorrow ._.]

I need your car, your nurse, your bike

"Would you like some tea?" Bang, I mean Saeko's father asks as he takes a sip of his usual, blistering hot tea while sitting on the opposite side of the table. Throwing a glance at the pink-haired girl that was for all intent and purpose, still attached to my arm. Saeko sitting next to me on the other side.

"No, thank you." I respond flatly. Saeko's father threw a one-eyed glance at me, before slowly leaving his cup on the table.

"My daughter told me that you wished to speak to me as soon as possible." He responds calmly.

"She told me you might have a plan? Something that could give us an, alternative to this place." I answer with a slight nod.

"You don't like it here?" He asks as he arks an eyebrow.

"As I matter of fact, I don't. You know what was the latest 'reward' I got for almost getting myself killed for a bunch of people that don't even know my name? A bunch of mouth breathers trying to rape Saya. So yes, I don't exactly find this place to be worth the effort." I respond with a slightly sarcastic tone as I motion my head towards the pinkette, who just kept staring at the floor. Saeko's father actually blinked at me in surprise as I spoke.

"That, is news to me. Does her father know about this?" He asks back as he glances at Saya, who kept her head down.

"I don't think so, I was not able to contact him since I returned. Nither did Saya." I respond.

"I see. I'll make sure to let him know of this then, he should be aware of the people he is dealing with. Do you, know who was responsible?" The old man nods slightly as he brings his hand to his chin.

"The actual groper? Some privileged tie in the high part of the camp. Personally though? I heard him mentioning the general. The same General that seems to have been caught a couple of times at the wrong place at the wrong time. That place being the camp's baths, the time being when it was full of naked girls." I respond as I tilt my head slightly.

"That, could indeed make things hard for you and your friends. Sadly, most of the general's bad points, are being ignored for the fact that he is in command of the safest base in the whole city." Saeko's father sighs slightly as he speaks.

"And it was because of his expertise I take it, not because the airport is essentially surrounded by sea with only one way through. Which happens to be an easily defendable bridge?" I 'ask'...

"Restarting the dam, linking up outposts. He might be a disgraceful individual. But we can't do anything as long as he gets results. Not in times like these. He also fills another important role for the rest of the government officials. One, of a scapegoat. He makes all the ugly decisions, conscripting civilians, sending people in essential suicide runs. The government will have to 'blame' somebody when balance returns and the masses will want justice for what they went through. The fact that he is a lecherous individual actually works for them, they let him do as he pleases, and when the time comes, they will come to 'slay the dragon'. I am actually, surprised if he has yet to realize that he is dancing around his own guillotine right now.

"Saeko's father folds his arms as he speaks.

"But in all honesty, I am more worried about the 'new' arrivals. The general, for all his faults, has seen the chaos and knows of the danger the infected possess." He adds as he turns his stare towards his cup of tea.

"So you mean I have to choose between a fat lecher that thinks this place is his personal brothel and has 'already' provoked me more than once. Or a bunch of pencil pushers that fled in their private helicopters and jets at the first sign of trouble. Who, while the word

was getting eaten alive, were snoring in their safe bunkers. And are as likely to fuck up and crawl back into their holes, leaving us to clean the mess, again. I think I'm better off living in the mountains if that's the case..." I sigh as I shake my head. Saeko's father closed his eyes and nods.

"And, as much as you, I am not interested in following people like that. So, that is why we are here now." He says as he opens his eyes.

"I would rather have a backup plan to fall back to. Should the infected outside prove to be more human than the humans here." He adds.

"And, what do you need me for?" I ask as I fold my arms.

"My estate." He replies flatly.

"It's located in a remote location on a rocky hill a bit outside of town. Only one way to get there, which is an easily guarded zig-zag uphill road. The place is big enough to act as storage. And safe enough to not be constantly on guard about it. It's protected by a sturdy outer wall should 'something' manage to get close. And has ample space inside to act as a farm to sustain a good amount of people. And, until the power cables have been repaired for it to draw power, it has its own generator. The place also has its own underground lake, so as long as we have power, we can draw water. Infected, they can only be 'let' in. And, if you are wondering why I had yet to mention this place, is because I don't want it to fall in the wrong hands. I trust you enough to believe you won't try to backstab me, or my daughter." As he speaks, he strokes his chin, seemingly proud of what he was saying.

"What about 'not' infected." I ask. The old man just smiles.

"The place was outfitted for unwanted guests long before the outbreak. As people before the outbreak were not exactly any better than now. I might dare say that the chance of somebody trying to

weasel their way in might has actually decreased now. Bulletproof windows, armored doors, thick walls. Did I mention the place has actual trap doors?" He chuckles.

(... Thi guy's nuts. And I love it.)

"But? There must be a but, otherwise, I would not be here, would I? This whole gig sounds a bit, too good." I ask as I fold my arms.

"You think I'll use you for my gain?" he asks.

"Yes." I reply flatly.

"And you are right. I want you to do two things. One is to go there, and clear the place for me, because as hard as it is to let infected in, it is as hard to drive them out, should they get in, which, they did. Now the second, is to find people you trust." He replies.

"People?" I ask.

"Unless you can make that place really impregnable and as self-sustainable as possible by yourself the go ahead. Just know that Souichiro is willing to spare me some people, in exchange for him being able to use it as well. I want you to be the one who picks who goes there. " He responds.

"All that sounds awesome. But I have yet to see 'why' I should do it." I ask again.

"After we take it back. You can stay there, no strings attached. That of course includes people close to you. I intend to use the place as a fallback location. A fallback location still needs to be guarded. I'd rather trust the man my daughter has put her faith in, rather some random people Souichiro handed me. If I had to say that there is an extra prerequisite. It would be that you don't lose it. And that taking my daughter with you, is mandatory." The old man finally adds as he picks up his teacup.

"Think about it, and when you decide, inform my daughter." He adds as he takes a sip, then closes his eyes...

(... Choices huh? Really, what do we have? One is, staying here. And considering it took less than a fucking day for somebody to try and molest Saya. Staying here is like I'm asking to one day wake up with me dead and some dudes over the girls. The second is leaving, and honestly, living like a caveman. I could get electricity as I studied some basics for solar panels, but water and food? Good luck with that. Add the risk of bandits and corpses. We will probably have to stay on the move if we go down that path. As none of us know to farm and even with a water purifier, I don't know how safe the rivers are. And it's not like I can internet that information now. Following Saeko's dad essentially is the best of both worlds, if things go as he said. Which probably won't. Though that mostly depends on 'who' will be in that estate with me...)

"And, there is another thing I want to ask you." Saeko's father then speaks up again, after taking a sip from his volcano tea.

"What are you going to do?" He asks right after.

"Uhh, do?" I ask back as I tilt my head questionably.

"These, people. They hurt somebody important to you. Are you going to seek revenge? Or?..." He asks again as she glances at Saya.

"My main target is to first and foremost make sure that these 'important' people are safe. As much as I'd like to hijack a tank right now and run over a couple of people. It's just going to make things harder for us in the long run." I sigh slightly as I glance at the table. The old man just nodded and he closed his eyes, taking another sip of his tea.

"Keeping a clear head in times like these can make quite the difference." He adds as he glances at me.

"Also, I won't have to inform Saeko, of anything. We will go. I'll just need to find some people. And a transport." I respond as I start to get up.

"Very well. Come to me once you are set then. I'll see if I can maybe, sweeten the deal for you." The old man adds as he finally focuses solely on his teacup.

With that, me and the girls get up, and turn to leave the room.

The moment we entered the hallway, I turn to the pinkette still attached to my arm..

"Saya, are you alright?" I ask as I turn to lean towards the silent pinkette, who responded with a low-toned murmur. Her grip on my arm tightening.

"I know we didn't have any time to stop the moment I arrived. If you need a break, tell me." I add as I ruffle her hair.

"... I, am fine..." She answers with a whisper. Then closes her eyes and takes a deep breath. Before opening them, and lifting her head to look at me.

"I am fine. Really. Do not worry. I just. Just let me hold on to you for a bit longer..." She continues as she makes a slight smile. I just nod in response.

"Naier? Got any people we could take with us in mind?" Saeko asks right after.

"As a matter of fact. I do." I respond as we start walking.

"We will need some basics. A mechanic, a doctor, and a car or truck." I answer.

"For one, we don't know a doctor. But, we know someone close enough." I continue.

"You mean Shizuka?" Saeko asks back. I just nod.

"You think she would just come with us though? She has been with the rest of the group for far longer. She is probably more attached to them if I am to be plain." Saeko responds.

"Yes, that's where Rika come in." I answer. Saeko tilted her head questionably, even Saya lifted her head to look at me with a questioning look.

"She and Shizuka knew each other for much longer. Also, Rika owns the Humvee we used. Methinks with her on our team we can get both a nurse, and a car." I shrug slightly.

"Hmm, not a bad idea." Saeko nods slightly as we start going down the stairs.

"No idea about a mechanic though..." I sigh as we keep going.

"... I know one." Saya then speaks up.

"Hmm? You do?" I ask back, Saya just nods.

"He works for my father, he used to play with me sometimes when I was a kid. I think his name was, Mazato?" Saya continues.

(Oh? Oh Yea, the chubby guy that popped from under the Humvee and got an eyeful of Saya panties in the anime. Hmm, the guy did seem mellow enough. Didn't he have a loved one though? Or was he actually speaking about Saya...)

"Not a bad idea, and there's Igano. We could use a gun expert. I might know my way around a gun, but I ain't go mechanic." I respond.

"Won't Khota do for that?" Saeko asks back.

"Uhh, while I'd agree. Khota, means Asami. And, if we add a total of three people from our old group, something tells me they will just

want to take everybody with..." I continue.

"Don't take this the wrong way, but I'm not too keen on trusting Takashi after his last stunts. Plus, Rei ain't gonna be leaving without her dad, Takashi won't leave without Rei. And I'm not taking an unstable cop in a car full of guns." I sigh slightly as I shake my head.

"What about the other girl you saved?" Saeko asks again.

"Hmm? You mean Hitomi?" I ask back.

"Yes, she did tell that her father took her fishing did she not? Maybe she might know some skills that can help us." She continues, taking the final step off the stairs.

"That, is not a bad idea. We would hit jackpot if she knew something about farming or camping." I nod as I try to fold my arms, only to remember that one of them was still immobile because of a pinkette.

"So, Rika, Shizuka, Hitomi, Igano, and uhh, the mechanic." I say as I take a deep breath.

"Mazato." Saya corrects me with a mumble.

(Well, I would prefer Khota over Igano. Since I knew him longer. But...)

And so, we exit the main building...

"Alright. Where do we start?" Saeko asks right after.

"Car is mandatory. Even if we get absolutely anybody. We need it to even get there. So, Rika." I respond.

"Isn't she already part of the military though? If she comes with us, won't that by extension means the army can get involved?" Saeko asks as we start heading towards the bridge.

"Police, not army. And, I don't know. She didn't seem to take the army code to heart..." I respond.

(... Wait, Hitomi, is supposed to be at the camps right? The same camps where Saya almost got raped...)

"Uhh, did you two 'see' Hitomi by any chance?" I ask as I stop.

"Hmmm, no, not really. She was not in the newcomer part of the camp." Saeko responds.

"Is something on your mind?" She asks right after.

"Considering the way we found her. I just hope she did not end up in the hands of another bunch of dickheads..." I respond.

Saeko did not respond, and neither did Saya.

"Going back to the camps though, something tells me that there might be people looking for us there. While I guess the army won't interfere since we are still standing here. I don't know about the refugees themselves..." I sigh as I fold my arms.

"Uhh, I'll see if Rika can look for her. So let's go to her first." I add as we start walking again.

"You sure seem to have a lot of faith in her." Saeko responds, folding her arms and leaning slightly forward.

"More than everybody else in here. Minus you and Saya I mean." I answer as I turn to look at Saeko.

"I see. Forgive me If I sound envious." Saeko then lowers her head slightly.

"It is just. You have been a bit, distant. Ever since you returned." She adds as she lifts her head to look at me.

I take a deep breath, and stop.

"One of you almost got raped. And had I been too late, both you and Saya might have ended up being past the 'almost' part." I close my eyes before tapping my helmet.

"I'm really trying not just walk into that camp right now and burn all of it to the ground, innocent people or not. The idea that some fat ass prick is getting off thinking about you is, rubbing me the wrong way. At best." I add as I turn to look at her.

"I just want to be done with this place, as soon as possible. Because Hell knows I can't relax if I know that we have vultures drooling over you two." I add as I glance at Saya.

"I, am sorry. I did not mean to sound self-centered." Saeko lowers her head slightly.

"Don't worry about it. Essentially, it means that you care, no?" I chuckle as I pat her head. Saeko just closes her eyes and smiles slightly.

"Thank you." She whispers as she opens her eyes and stares right at me.

(They should consider themselves lucky that making you two are higher on my priority list.)

With that, we turn to head towards the bridge.

Saya finally let go of my arm mid-trip. She also stopped looking so, shaken...

(Rika is probably done with the boat loading by now, so. Where would I be if I was Rika? Hmmm. Oh wait, that guard by the airport checkpoint seemed to know Rika, at least by surname. If she left the airport he'd know.)

And so, the moment we reached the bridge, we passed the first checkpoint, and headed straight towards the exit, where the

mentioned guard was at. Sitting on a chair in the corner of the barricade, drinking a bottle of something.

"Hey, mind if I ask you something?" And I speak up the moment I closed in, the man casually turning to look at me, then at Saeko, then at Saya.

"Uhh? The hero of the airport needs something of me?" The guy chuckles, sounding rather sarcastic, though the tone of his voice made it more sound like he was joking, rather than trying to sound diminishing.

"Minami has passed the checkpoint?" I ask.

"Hmm? Nope, apparently dead people can not pass." The guy shrugs.

"Dead? Care you explain that?" I ask again.

"Apparently, she's dead. In the papers at least. She is at the airport's main building now. Probably chocking some idiot that just labeled her whole team K.I.A. to avoid extra paperwork. Good thing you're not conscripted huh? You'd be dead too." The guy chuckles.

"I see, thanks." I nod, and turn to leave.

"I can barely manage to hit one, he has two, three? Maybe I should get a mask too..." I hear him whisper as he turns to his drink.

(At least you are trying to change your approach instead of just pushing somebody down...)

And so, we headed towards the main building of the airport.

Upon getting closer to it, we spotted several piles of shattered glass around it. And the building itself, which used to have giant panes of glass walls, probably for visitors to look through towards the planes, was now essentially full of giant holes. Inside the building I could see people walk around, proving that the insides had been cleared.

"Ok, now where is Rika?" I ask as I look towards the entrance.

"Uhhh, there." Saeko then points to my right, towards a bench. A purple-haired woman, her elbows behind the bench's backrest, cigar between her fingers, staring at the sky as she was essentially sprawled on the bench.

(Purple-haired Samurai, found the purple-haired sniper.)

"Nice catch. That looks like her alright." I nod as we turn to head towards the woman, who indeed turned out to be Rika.

Upon closing in...

"First they sign me off as dead, now they tell me to wait in line..." Rika mumbled as she kept looking at the sky.

"The guy was not kidding huh. They labeled you as K.I.A..." I tilt my head as I speak. Rika lowers her head to look at me, and scoffs.

"Can you believe that? They already handed all of my stuff too." She responds as she lifts both her arms with a groan.

"But what about you?" She adds as she lowers her arms, taking a puff out of her cigar.

"Better than bad. Worse than good. Sadly, I was not that far off..." I respond, glancing at Saya.

"Oh shit. Sorry for acting so inconsiderate. Everything alright?" Rika then sits on the bench normally, her expression turning serious.

"No, not really. But let's just say that our damage was not permanent. Theirs, was." I respond as I take a deep breath.

"Ahhh, at least some good news is better than no good news." Rika sighs as she looks toward the sky.

"So, you're jobless now?" I ask as I fold my arms.

"More like lifeless." Rika chuckles.

"For how long?" I ask again.

"I don't know. Apparently, it takes a lot of paperwork to make somebody, 'not dead'." Rika huffs as she puffs her cigar.

"God this is annoying. They even tossed out my favorite vibrator..." she whispers as she keeps looking at the sky...

(... Did you really just say that or I'm hearing things...)

I glance at the girls, to find them also staring at Rika with a funny expression...

(Yep, she said that...)

"Why do we want her with us again?" Saya mumbles.

"Hmm? You want who with who?" Rika asks as she turns to look at Saya, who just turns to look away.

"So, uhh. Here's the gig. You know how everybody here is an asshole?" I speak up, Rika turning to look at me with one mean-ass frown, folding her arms as she narrows her eyes at me.

"Ok, almost everybody." I respond.

"Thank you." Rika makes an exaggerated nod before leaning back in her seat.

"I'm going to be leaving." I add right after, Rika blinking at me with a blank expression.

"Uhh, leaving as in..." She mumbles as she tilts her head.

"Packing up, and leaving, for good." I answer.

"I see. I'll admit it's not that surprising..." Rika shrugs slightly.

"Want to come with?" I add.

"... That, is surprising." Rika arcs an eyebrow as she looks at me, then, smirks.

(Oh god, that fucking smirk again.)

"Hmm? Are you inviting me somewhere commando?" Rika 'asks' as she leans toward me.

"No funny jokes here please, I'm being serious." I respond as I shake my head.

"Ahh, ok, ok I get it. We talk business then." Rika lifts both hands in surrender as she leans back up.

"I'll be plain. I need your car, your Shizuka, and your bike. And something tells me I'll need you for all of these." I say as I fold my arms.

"Uhhh, what? I need more information bub, we are talking business after all. You can't expect me to just blindly follow, even though I sort of owe you. Also, I'm not giving you my bike, you're not a killer robot from the future." Rika also folds her arms and crosses her legs with a smirk.

"Wait, you have a bike?" I ask back as I tilt my head.

"Nope, but you are not the terminator either." Rika chuckles.

"Fair enough. So, back to the point at hand. We are taking back the Busujima estate. Based on what Saeko's father said, that place should be able to be self-sufficient as an actual base, should we have the people for it. I need the car to get there, I need Shizuka because she is a doctor, and she's a person I trust more than some other random doctor. And if I should give a reason, I need you because you can bolster the place's defense after we get it back. " I answer as I keep staring at Rika.

"Hmmm, I see..." Rika narrows her eyes and lowers her sight, seemingly thinking...

A few seconds pass...

The seconds turn to minutes...

"... Well..." Saya whispers...

"Huh?" Rika lifts her head to look at the pinkette.

"Oh, yea sure I'll come with. Not much to think about that. After all, I'm dead no?" Rika casually answers.

"Uhh, wait. What were you thinking all this time then?" I ask.

"Which day of the week I'll be on in the harem." Rika answers flatly.

"... What..." I ask as I drop my shoulders.

"I mean, these two are probably the weekend. Everybody loves the weekend. Shizuka is too mellow, so, Friday? That leaves me all the bad days. Then again, I think Monday suits my temperament the most..." Rika puts her hand under her chin and narrows her eyes and looks towards the distance.

"... Why do we want her with us again?" Saya asks with a low tone, again.

"She has a car." I answer.

"I also have a nice ass." She continues with a casual tone.

"In that case, you won't mind going to the camp to find somebody for me." I respond as I tilt my head.

"Hue?..." Rika just blinks at me as she also tilts her head.

"Her name is Hitomi, we arrived with her. See if she's interested in joining us, or more like, if she can speak with us." I answer as I turn to look towards the bridge.

"The camp huh..." Rika gets up and tosses her cigar.

"Very well, boss." She continues as she makes a playful wink.

"She can be Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday." She chuckles as she starts walking.

"... Let's go see about the mechanic in the meantime. Since Saya's dad is willing to spare people, I want to check that mechanic..." I say as I turn to walk as well, ignoring Rika's remark.

"Hmm, what do you need a second mechanic for?" Rika asks as she turns to me.

"... You, know how to fix cars?" I ask.

"Well, I had taken some lessons. Not keen on letting people fiddle with my baby." Rika shrugs.

"And now you will tell me you are also a good weapon mechanic." I sarcastically add as I fold my arms.

"Weeeeeelll. I can't engrave your gun, but other than that. I did custom-built and maintain mine myself~" Rika folds her arms and shrugs slightly as she smirks.

"... Guess we have a change of plans then. Hitomi is all we 'might' need." I tilt my head as I tap the mask with my finger.

"You sure you don't want me to find you two more girls? Just to close the days of the week?" Rika chuckles.

"... Maybe we should get Khota after all..." I groan as I roll my eyes.

"And, speaking of your baby. Where is it? Tell me they gave it away as well." I ask right after.

"Nope, her dad sort of took it when you arrived. Considering there's only one Humvee in the airport. And he has it." Rika points at Saya as she speaks.

"Well, hope they didn't wreck it..." I take a deep breath as I start to walk.

"By the way, won't you get into trouble for, you know, being dead?" I ask as we head towards the bridge.

"Not if I'm no longer here. Might as well really be dead for them. Just another casualty." Rika shrugs.

"Oh and by the way. You know that Shizuka will essentially just beg you to bring everybody along right?" She adds right after...

"Aaaand you can't do anything about that I take it?" I ask.

"I ain't a miracle worker commando. If I tell her to decide with who to go, there's a bigger chance she'll just get so stressed she'll start crying instead of actually making a choice." Rika shakes her head as she speaks.

"Just perfect..." I groan under my breath as we keep walking.

(Essentially to get a medic, I'll have to get extra baggage. And while Kohta is fine, Asami and especially Rei and Takashi, I do not really trust. But, if there's no choice, might as well take them. Better than taking a random smuck that'll leave the doors open at night. Then again, I actually know the group better than Hitomi. I'm just counting that she'll feel at least partly indebted to us for saving her to not just stab us in the back...)

And, as we reached the bridge...

"Each time I see you you have more women around you. What gives?" The soldier, who was still on the chair, scoffs as he looks at us. Slowly getting up.

"He's building a harem." Rika casually answers.

"... Why do we need her again?..." Saya whispers from behind me.

"Car and nurse?" Saeko asks back.

"And ass." Rika continues.

"..." I just kept staring at the soldier as the girls kept, trolling essentially.

"I have never been so jealous and so glad about not being somebody else in my entire life." The soldier chuckles as he opens the barricade.

"Take care not to die again huh." He adds as he motions to Rika.

"Hate to break it to you..." Rika speaks up as she passes the barricade with us.

"But I'm actually still dead." She adds as she turns to the soldier with a shrug.

And with that, Rika and the rest of us head over the bridge, exit through the barricade on the other side, and head towards the camp.

"So, what exactly do you want me to say to this Hitomi?" Rika asks as we stop nearby the camp.

"Just ask her if she's interested in hearing about an offer I got. Don't mention me though. " I respond. Rika just nods back.

"Now, we'll go check for your Humvee. Let's meet outside the main building." I continue, Rika nods again.

"Alright commando. I mean boss." She then adds with a chuckle.

"My friends call me Ninja penguin, the evil overlord." I respond with a deadpan voice.

"... How much of that, was Shizuka?" Rika asks as she tilts her head questionably.

"Ehh, maybe fifty percent?" I answer with a shrug.

"... Only? I'm impressed she managed to hold herself." Rika chuckles as she turns to enter the camp.

"Oh one last thing, part of the camp is for 'privileged' and civilians that have a 'use'." I bring my hands up and bend my index and middle fingers a couple of times as I speak. Rika just makes a thumbs-up as she keeps walking.

"... Is she going to make that harem joke for much longer?" Saya mumbles...

"You do seem to be gathering only girls to your team though. Rika, Shizuka, Hitomi." Saeko continues.

"... Fine, let's get Khota then." I groan as I turn to head towards the backyard of the main building, where Souchiro had set up camp. Hoping to find our car there. Saeko giggled behind me.

-A few minutes later-

Upon reaching the back of the building, we started looking around. For like, two minutes.

Since you know, most of their cars were the type 73 jeep. And a Humvee? There was only one of them. Parked in what I think was a makeshift garage on the corner of the field.

"Damn that beast sticks out like a sore thumb next to the other jeeps." I fold my arms as I walk up towards the Humvee.

"You think they will let us have it back?" Saeko asks right after.

"Souichiro is supposed to help us right?" I respond as we stop next to the car.

"Hmm? Miss Takagi?" And, a new voice speaks up. From under the Humvee. Matsudo, the mechanic Saya mentioned popping from under the Humvee...

(... Some things, never change...)

Thankfully, he did not actually end up right under Saya's skirt, unlike in the anime.

"Oh, you." Saya just glances at the man before turning to me.

"He's the mechanic I talked about." She adds as she turns to me.

The man then crawls out of the Humvee's underside and gets up. His clothes, a mess, for the lack of a better term.

"Your parents need me?" He asks right after.

"Huh? How would I know?" Saya tilts her head as she folds her arms.

"You didn't meet them? They were looking for you. Looked important, your mother looked a bit on edge to be honest." The mechanic responds as he blinks blankly.

"They, did? Where, where are they now?" Saya asks, her eyes going slightly wide.

"The tent in the center last time I checked." Matsuro answers as he points behind us. Towards the maintenance tent.

Saya then quickly turned to almost run towards the tent.

(Did Saeko's dad tell them?)

"So, uhh, back to the point. I need that Humvee back." I then turn to the mechanic. Who just turned to look at me.

"Uhh..." The man just kept staring at me.

"Not exactly my jurisdiction to hand mister's Souichiro's assents." He scratches his cheek as he speaks.

"Mister Souichiro is supposed to support Mister Busujima Hideshi with a mission. I am here for that." I answer.

"I, have not been informed of such, sorry but I can't exactly give you one of our cars without having my boss's confirmation." The mechanic shakes his head negatively as he speaks.

(Your car. That car is Rika's, not yours.)

"Guess I'll go to Saya then, if her parents are there and they give the ok, it should be enough if Takagi mini informs you. Right?" I ask. The mechanic just nods.

With a small sigh, I turn around and start heading towards the main tent.

And, the moment I reached the tent and took a step in...

"M,mama, I said I'm, ok..." Saya, who was in the corner next to the entrance with her mother and father mumbled. As Yuriko, her mother, had both her hands on her cheeks.

"Are you sure? Does it hurt anywhere? Does anything feel off?..." Her mother asks, her face showing obvious concern. Her father standing next to her, arms folded. Looking, to be plain, genuinely angry. Angrier than usual at least.

"Mama, I said I'm fine. Naier beat them up before they could do anything..." Saya answers again, darting her eyes around, fiddling with her fingers.

"Do you know who they are?" Souichiro then speaks up. His question sounded more like a demand. Though Saya just shook her head.

"It won't be really hard to find them right now to be honest, one of em is missing three fingers. Probably still bleeding all over the place." I speak up as I stop next to the trio.

"His name." Shouchiro this time flatly demanded.

"That, I did not ask. I know he speaks with the army's general though, you know, the fat one. Also, is married? And lives in the 'good' part of the camp section." And as I finish, Souichiro walks past me...

"You! And you! Come with me! You! Go bring another five men!" He then shouts at the men scattered in the tent.

"We're about to start a shitstorm huh?" I ask as I look at Shouichiro leaving the tent.

"Naier, I have lost how many times I had thanked you so far. But it would seem I have to thank you, again." And Saya's mother speaks up as she finally lets go of her daughter.

"Well, if it's not much to ask, we could use a car. My car. The Humvee I arrived with. Mister Busujima gave me an offer I'm interested in taking." I respond.

"Ah, his estate? Yes, he has informed us of his plan along with..." She stops and turns to glance at Saya.

"You can take whatever you want. People, resources. It is the least we can do for you right now. As long as you take my daughter with you. I feel like she'll be safer with you around." Yuriko answers.

(... Deza vu)

"This place is not safe. And will probably become much less safe."
She adds then turns to face Saya.

"Be very careful ok dear? And I know that you don't like listening to people. But, do listen to Naier. Ok?" She adds as she ruffles Saya's hair, then turns to leave the tent as well.

Saya just stood there looking, happy?

"They, they were actually worried about me..." She mumbled as she starts rubbing her eyes.

"... Wait, you honestly thought they would just scoff off the fact somebody tried to rape you?" I ask as I fold my arms.

"S, Shut up..." She mumbled as she kept rubbing her eyes.

"Now there's the Saya we all know and love." I chuckle as I walk up to her and pat her head.

"Shut up..." She mumbled again, this time with an even lower tone.

"Should we head back to the car?" Saeko then asks.

(... My, are you trying to actually cut this short? Almost feels like you feel left out. Which, uhh, is something I'm definitely not going to say. Because it is mostly true...)

"Yea. And, Saya, can we trust the mechanic? I'd like to ask him to join either way. As long as he won't run off with our equipment in the middle of the night." I ask.

"He has worked for my parents for years, his whole family is still alive because of my parents. I don't think he will do something like that." Saya responds as she takes a deep breath, then lifts her head to look at me, her eyes slightly red.

"Well, let's go ask him then." I respond as I motion with my head towards the exit of the tent, Saya makes a big nod and starts walking

next to me.

Get set

Review answers

.gervas - Naw, he remains an idiot foreva.

REYZERO - I don't know if I'll reuse the island yet, as for using other character perspectives, this story will stay through Naier's perspective only.

jarjarhead - You will find out in this chapter xD

derethl2 - Yas, everybody became retarded in that aspect, including myself. Maybe someday I will remake these chapters. Maybe someday...

Rabcor - Who knows...

teguhbn80 - That would be a way for the story to go on yea.

Xentiz & snow in the darkness & Jub-erth - Thank you.

"So, we good?" I ask as I tap the Humvee's hood.

"Yes yes, fuel canisters, ammo, and food. The car did have these things inside initially, so I'll see what we can add. But you must understand that these resources from inside the car have been redistributed long ago, don't expect to get the same amount back." Masato the engineer nods .

"And, I am sorry for turning down your offer, but as you understand, I can not leave my family behind." He adds as he makes a small bow.

"It's fine." I nod back.

(After all, he does have a wife. So yea, let's hope Rika is as good as she says on the mechanic part, or we'll end up with a flintstone's car.)

"What's next?" Saya asks as she turns towards me.

"Rika should be done with the camp by now, no?" Saeko adds right after.

"Yea, let's go check the front of the main building, if she's not there, we'll wait outside the camp. With your dad there right now, I don't think your old 'friends' will have time to bother us." I motion with my head and start to walk towards the front of the building.

"... They're not my 'friends'. Not even for a joke..." Saya retorts as she frowns.

"Didn't you want to ask a gun mechanic too?" Saeko asks as she walks up next to me.

"Yea, I didn't see him in the tend though, so no idea where he's at." I answer with a slight shrug.

Without much more to say, we headed to the front of the building, and upon finding it Rika-less, we headed to the front of the camp.

"... You, won't have trouble going in?" I ask as I turn to Saya, who just returns my question with her signature frown.

"Quit thinking that I'm that weak. I will be fine." She responds as she puts her hands on her hip, leaning towards me. I just lift my hands and chuckle. The turn to enter the camp.

"... You are with me now..." She adds with a whisper.

"True, I'm one scary pomeranian. Sorry, meant penguin." I chuckle.

"W, what are you talking about?! I didn't say anything!" Saya blurts out as she glances away.

(Damn, back to good old Saya huh?)

"I do not mean to interrupt, but I think we won't actually have to enter." Saeko motions with her head towards the inside, at the purple-haired woman that was walking towards us, her hand raised and waving. And next to her, Asami, and Khota. The latter of which had his arm in a sling.

"Uhh. Hitomi turned into a chubby guy and a short cop girl." I add as I tilt my head.

And the moment Rika closed in.

"My liege, I have failed you." She speaks up with a dramatic tone. Khota and Asami silently stopping behind her.

"Miss Tuesday did not want to join." She adds as she shakes her head in an exaggerated manner.

"..." I just kept staring.

"But yea, a Hitomi that did know you is working at the camp's kitchen now." She continues as she stops acting like a total jester.

"Wait don't soldiers give rations? Why do they need the kitchen camp?" I ask as I frown.

"In the newcomer's sector, you get rations. The other sector has an actual bonafide kitchen, they had spaghetti and meatballs today. Apparently, the girl is a really good cook. She managed to mingle with the other cooks. Sadly for us, she said that she had enough excitement to last her more than one lifetime, so I guess she likes it there?" Rika adds with a shrug.

"I found these two though." She chuckles as she points her thumb behind her, Kohta and Asami finally turning to look at us, or well, Saya.

"Umm, are you, ok?" And Asami spoke up first. Saya just turned to stare at Rika.

"You told them?" She asks, Rika just nods.

"I shouldn't have?" She asks right after, Saya shakes her head.

"No, it's fine. And I'm fine, don't worry about it. Naier made sure that they paid for what they tried to do." Saya continues.

"Ahh, Asami is sorry she was not there to help as well. As a police officer, I have failed to do my duty when somebody needed me." Asami makes a deep bow towards Saya as she finishes speaking.

"Last time I heard about you, you were stuck on the other side of town. Yet in less than a day you're back beating the bad guys up. Nothing can keep you down huh? I, am sorry I didn't do anything. If I knew..." Khota then speaks up, lowering his head and dropping his shoulders.

"Don't sweat it. Besides, I don't think you could that much with one arm less." I respond as I point at his disabled arm. Khota just lets out a small chuckle, then sighs.

"Yeea. Supposedly it will be fine, just needs rest. Shizuka told me not to move it and it should heal fine..." Khota responds as he glances at his arm.

"At least 'you' are taking your injury seriously..." I answer as I glance at Rika, causing the rest to also turn towards her.

"... What? I'm fine. It was just a headless arrow to the butt. I can walk just fine." Rika shrugs as she turns to look away.

"Though it was in the thigh..." I whisper as I tilt my head.

"... What?" Saya tilts her head questionably as she holds her arms.

"What what? Do you want to have a look?" Rika 'asks' as she starts unzipping her overalls.

"I, I don't care!" Saya then quickly blurts out as she grabs both of Rika's arms.

"But seriously, I know my limits. I won't do something I know I can't. Besides, they checked me at the harbor. You know, it's weird though, considering in the outpost they just let us pass, and they didn't even check you once..." Rika lifts her zipper back up as she sighs.

" God made them retarded. " I answer flatly.

"What..." Saya asks back.

" God made them retarded. " I answer again.

"That makes no s..."

" God made them retarded. " I answer again.

...

And, silence...

-"I MADE THEM RETARDED!".

"BARK!"

"DOWN GIRL!"-

"Uhh, so, question. Where is Shizuka, Rei and Takashi." I ask again.

"Miss Shizuka is with us. She is tending to Khota's wound. Rei is in the main building with her father, Takashi is with her." Asami responds.

(... Hmm, Rika knows how to deal with guns and. Well injury or not, she seems to be in better condition than Khota. Which might be a good shot, but with that arm. He can't do jack. The problem is, the chances of Shizuka coming are even thinner if we don't take anybody from the old group...)

"Well, it was good seeing you Khota, now if you don't mind, we need to get ready. We're leaving today." I nod slightly and turn to look behind me.

"Wait, you are leaving?" Khota asks as his eyes go wide.

"Yea, I just said that." I answer as I fold my arms.

"W, where are you going?" He asks again.

"Somewhere where we will be safer than here, but, we'll have to pull our own weight. The place is infested, if you understand what I mean." I answer again as I point at his arm.

"Ohh..." Khota lets out a disheartened sigh as he lowers his head.

"Don't take this the wrong way, but with your arm like that, it'll be like having a kid to tag along." I answer as I sigh.

"Speaking of it, where is the minion dog and Alice?" I ask right after.

"Ahh, they are with us, or well, with Shizuka." Asami answers.

"You think of taking them instead?" Saeko asks.

"Uhh, I'd rather have an actua, aa..." And my nose started itching.

"A FACHOO!" And I sneezed, bringing my hand to my face reflexively as I lowered my head.

"Hey! Watch it!" Saya shouts and leans away from me, her arms next to her chest.

"Uhh. Sorry, the hell was that..." I shake my head and tap my mask.

"As I said, I'd rather have an actual guard dog instead of a less shaky chiwawa." I clear my throat as finish speaking.

"And I'm not too keen on child labor. Because as I also said, no freebies." I add as I fold my arms.

"Now, let me guess. 'If' we bring you along, you want these two to come as well?" I ask as I tilt my head.

"Uhh, well. Rei and Takashi have been with Rei's dad since we arrived, I don't know if they..." Khota lowered his head slightly as he looked away.

"We're all Alice has left, we can't just leave her behind!" He adds as he lifts his head to look at me.

"So, let's all just die together?" I answer flatly. Causing Khota to stare at me as he took a deep breath, then he looked away again.

"You are out of commission, the dog obviously can't do jack, may even hinder us if it starts barking, Alice can't fight. Asami needs to stay by your side. And Shizuka can't fight either. This ain't a trip to pixy-land." I add as I narrow my eyes.

"What if we take them 'after' we clear the place?" Rika asks.

"Elaborate please." I ask back.

"You mentioned that place was big. Farming? Guarding? Maybe they can do that since they can't fight right now." Rika points at Asami and Khota as she speaks.

"We will take the danger of clearing the place and going on runs outside if need be, they can do the more, domesticated part of the work." She responds.

"Asami can do that!" Asami then quickly speaks up as she raises her hand.

"... so we're resorting to child labor after all huh." Saya scoffs as she turns to Rika.

"Everybody needs to pull their weight no? Besides, kids have a lot of energy, if she learns to do some basic farming to feed herself while making it a game for her, it will help her in the long run. Or you know, somebody can just fill in her part if they want to." Rika shrugs.

"That is not a bad idea actually." Saeko arcs an eyebrow as she glances at Rika.

"What about you?" I ask as I look at Khota.

"I'll, I'll do anything I can!" Khota responds, loudly, as he straightens his back, few civilians around us turn to look at the guy that was not standing attention.

"So, only Takashi and Rei left?..." Rika asks. I just let out a small groan.

"You really don't like these two, do you." Rika then adds.

"One essentially pointed a finger and tossed all the blame on me the moment pushed came to shove. The other just simped so hard that he probably forgot his dick inside her." The moment I finish speaking Rika brings her hand over her mouth and holds back a chuckle.

"Ghh, good one. I'll need to remember that one." She adds as she points at me with a smile.

"But yeah, I don't exactly have a lot of positive feelings for the ones that just agreed to turn me into a scapegoat." I continue.

"Plus, I don't want an unsteady cop in a car full of weapons." I add.

"A, Asami is not unstable! She's just..."

"I meant Rei's dad..." I cut Asami off, getting an embarrassed 'oh' as a response.

"True, I don't think Rei would agree to leave without her dad." Khota continues.

"Being unable to help on the first stage is one thing, being a danger overall is another. Bringing him is out of the question." I shake my head.

"The only reason I'm asking you, is because I'd like to believe you ain't gonna try to stab me in the back so you can sit on a bigger chair." I continue as I stare at Khota.

"I'd never do that!" Khota actually went wide-eyed as he stared at me.

(That's what I'm betting on.)

"Well, we should fo..."

-BANG-

I had not even managed to finish that sentence, when a loud gunshot echoed...

"That, was from the main part of the camp, you don't think your dad..." I turn to look at Saya as I speak...

"Papa!" And she almost instantly breaks off into a sprint, and into the camp.

I take a deep breath, and turn to follow after her.

Running towards the gunshot, it didn't take long before we found the perpetrator. And, the standoff...

Several of Souichiro's men were at gunpoint with a few guards. And In the middle, Souichiro, his hand raised forward and towards the

sky, a smocking handgun in his hand. Ahead of him, mister grabby finger-less. Sitting on his ass with a look of surprise and horror on his face.

"H, have you gone senile?!" The almost rapist shouts at Saya's father.

"Why the hell are you shooting a gun here?!" He adds as he tries to get up. The word being tried, as he ended up with a boot to his face.

(Risky movement there, he does know that soldiers are aiming at him right?)

"Silence! You will speak when I tell you to speak!" Souichiro shouts. Then turns to look toward us.

"Good timing. Is that the man who tried to rape you?" He then asks as he turns his attention to Saya, who was a few feet away from him. I don't know if it was actual surprise, or the reaction that old women have when they watch a soap opera, but the crowd around did seem to become restless when they heard the word 'rape'.

"Yes." Saya answers flatly. Glaring at the man on the ground is an angry scowl.

"What the hell are you lazy asses waiting for! Shoot him! He attacked me!" The man shouts as he turns at the nearest guard. Who was speaking to his radio in his chest pocket.

From his whispering, I caught the words 'messed, important, crowd, angry.'

And, a few seconds later. He nods and lowers his gun.

"The general has given his full cooperation. And if one of his close associates is found guilty of such actions of barbarism, he'll cut ties with them immediately and see that they are punished accordingly."

The soldier responds and backs off, the other soldiers also lowering their guns as well.

"What?!" The man on the ground shouts.

"That ass-UGHFF!" And he didn't manage to finish his sentence when the butt of a gun landed on his face, the butt of a gun that belonged to a soldier.

"Cut ties huh? Trying to save face?" I whisper as I fold my arms.

"Probably. Nobody did 'see' the general while this guy was doing his thing, or has hard proof that he had anything to do with that guy's actions, so, nobody can throw blame at him. And by admitting that the guy 'was' his associate, he essentially tells a half-truth, which will make it much harder for this guy to pin blame on him. Since he can now start adding bullshit between his truths." Rika answers.

"Don't you hate it when assholes are somewhat competent?" She adds as she chuckles.

"You tell me..." I respond as I sigh.

Just then, Saya turns around and walks up to me.

"Let's go, we are finished here." She says as she throws a quick glance at the guy on the floor.

"Aight, let's gather at the front of the main building." I nod and turn around.

"Actually." And I stop.

"Let's go get Shizuka too. And the two mascots." I add as I motion with my head for Khota to lead the way.

"Ah, yes." Khota nods.

"Mascots..." Rika chuckles through her nose as she shakes her head.

And so, we moved away, back. Towards the other side of the camps. To the place that I found Saya.

Well ok, not exactly that place. Shizuka's and Khota's tent was further away.

-A few minutes later-

Finding it didn't take too long though. Mostly because Khota knew where he was going.

And because Shizuka had certain, assents, that made her visible from much further away.

"Ah, there she is!" Asami speaks up as she lifts her arm. Waving toward a woman who was speaking with a guy I did not know.

"Oh, he's here again." Khota almost groans as he looks at the man who was next to Shizuka.

"... Should I chop off more fingers?" I ask as I glance at Khota.

"W, what? Aaah, no, no it's fine. While uhh, it's been obvious where he has been staring ever since the first day he came to us. He has actually been really helpful. And Shizuka seems to not mind..." Khota responds.

"Not mind, or she does not realize the guy is probably fucking her in his mind." I ask back.

"D, do you have to say it like that?" Saya asks back as she nudges me. I just shrug in response.

"Shizukaaa!" And Asami speaks up, causing Shizuka to turn towards us, her eyes going wide.

"Ahh! Rikaaaa! Serflufier!" She shouts back as she starts, uhh, running towards us. The guy behind her just turned to glance at us, before silently turning round to leave.

"She just screamed Serflufier." I groan.

"She just screamed Serflufier." Rika chuckles.

Much to my surprise, she didn't actually dive-bomb anybody, instead, stopping next to us.

"Where have you been! I have not seen either of you ever since we got moved here!" She asks with a pout as she leans forward.

"Oh you know, our team got wiped, me and Naier had to stay in a house surrounded by a horde, we bonded reaaaal good though." Rika respond, and smirks.

"Whaaaahh! Are you ok?! Are you hurt?!" Shizuka then starts tapping down Rika, while.

"You did, what?!" Saya darts her head at Rika with an angry frown. Then at me...

"... Why do we need her with us again?..." I ask.

"A nurse and a car?" Saeko responds.

"And ass." Rika continues as she lifts a finger, turning at me with a smirk.

Saya glare pouts at Rika as she makes an 'I'm watching you' sign...

"Hmm? Sure, you can watch. I don't mind. You could probably use the experience~" Rick chuckle back.

"Gah! L, like I need your 'experience'." Saya folds her arms and turns to look away with a slight blush.

"Ohh, so you already have experience?" Rika asks back with a chuckle as she narrows her eyes at Saya.

"Q, quit asking stupid questions!" Saya stomps her foot as she turns to glare at Rika, her hands turning into fists as she brings them next to her hips.

"Uhhh, sooo, let's go?" I 'ask' as I point towards the direction of the camp's exit.

"Ahh, let me get Alice!" Khota raises his uninjured hand before heading towards the tent.

"Huum? Where are we going?" Shizuka asks as she lets go of Rika.

"Space." I reply flatly. Shizuka just stared at me with a blank expression for a few seconds.

"Rikkaaa, Serplier is being mean to me." Shizuka then pouts as she turns towards her chuckling friend.

"... Serplier. That's a new one..." I sigh as I shake my head.

"Should I inform my father that we are ready then?" Saeko asks right after.

"I would say yes. But something tells me we should at least inform Takashi that we are leaving." I respond.

"You know that's like asking him to come along." Saya adds as she folds her arms.

"Well, somebody needs to clean the latrines..." I whisper, hearing a muffled chuckle coming from Rika.

"But jokes aside. If he wants to come, he will have to listen to what I say, and he'll have to leave Rei's father behind. The first, he'll

probably agree to, the second, I doubt it." I answer as I also fold my arms.

"Alright, we're set!" And Khota, who just exited the nearby tent, speaks up as he lifts his arms, a couple of bags over his shoulder. Alice also exits behind him with Zeke in her arms. Yet, the moment she saw me, she hid behind Khota. Peeking from behind him with a worried expression.

"Uhh, It's ok Alice, he was not mad at you." Khota turns to pat Alice on the head as he spoke.

"..B, but..." Alice mumbles as she keeps peeking from behind Khota.

(... Right, the only time she saw me was when I went ballistic at Rei.)

"See, scary pomeranian." I respond as I turn to Saya

"I thought you said penguin." Saeko responds as she tilts her head. I just shrug in response, then turn around to head towards the exit of the camp.

"Are you not going to speak to Alice, she seems to be scared of you." Saya asks as she also turns to follow me.

"No time. Besides, we'll have plenty of time to spare after we get the mansion back..." I respond as I keep walking.

"You said Takashi was in the main building right?" I ask right after as I turn to look at Khota. Who just nodded.

"The main building here, or the one in the actual airport?" I ask again.

"Oh, the one here, the doors are heavier apparently, make for better cells." Khota responds. I just nod and turn to look ahead again.

"You want to go find him while I speak with my father?" Saeko asks right after.

"Yea, let's meet by the humvee once we are all set." I answer, Saeko nodding back at me.

And so, we split up.

Saeko went to her father, Saya and the rest waiting outside.

While I entered with Saeko, since otherwise, they would probably not let me in...

(... Where the fuck 'is' tha captain though?...)

With that though, I entered the building, and walked up to the nearest guard that was on the stairs that went up.

"Sorry, do you by any chance know where the cells are here? There's supposed to be a cop there. Along with two kids that are watching after him." I ask.

"The cells are in the hallway to the left, then down the stairs you'll find there." The guard casually points at the hallway behind me as he speaks. I nod back and turn to follow his instructions.

And sure enough, after entering the hallway, I spotted a flight of stairs to my right that went down not soon after.

(Down huh, we are at ground level, so it's underground?)

My question, was quickly answered as the bright light of the sun got replaced by the dim yellow light coming off from the light bulbs on the walls.

And sure enough, reaching the floor under, I found a hallway, not a single window in sight. Thankfully it seemed to have good ventilation though, as the air didn't feel stale.

A few guards were standing guard in front of the doors in the said hallway, one of em turning to look at me the moment I headed down.

"Are you lost? Go back up." The soldier standing guard in front of a door that had the letters 'storage' motioned with his head as he tried to shoo me away.

"I'm looking for the cells. There should be two kids my age there right now, Takashi Komuro and Rei Miyamoto, the girl's dad is the one in the cell. I need to speak to them." I respond as I fold my arms.

The guard stares at me for a few seconds.

"... Down the hallway and to the right. First door." The guard groans slightly as he leans on the door behind him. I nod, and start walking again...

"... Become a fucking kindergarten here..." The soldier whispers to himself as I walk past him.

(... Angy much? Too long with no sun makes your inner Gollum pop up?)

I just take a deep breath and keep moving. Taking a turn to the right the moment I reached the end of the hallway. Coming face to face, with Takashi. Who was munching on a sandwich.

"Hm, figured I'd have to deal with another guard at the door." I speak up as I fold my arms. Takashi turning to look at me.

"Naier? What are you doing here?" Takashi asks as he tilts his head.

"Came to use my last shred of goodwill. Is Rei inside?" I answer with a shrug, Takashi looking even more confused with my answer, before nodding slowly.

"Did you know Saya almost got raped while I was away?" I ask flatly, Takashi's eyes going wide in response.

"W,what?!" He responds with, honest surprise in his voice as he leans away from the door, fully turning to face me.

"Yea, thankfully for 'them', they didn't manage to do any permanent damage." I respond.

"I, I didn't know." Takashi answers as he turns to look at his food.

"Uhh, normally, I'd grind you about how you should have known, what with you being the leader and all. But, I'm honestly not in the mood." I sigh as I shake my head.

"No, I'm just here to inform you that me, and the rest of the group, are leaving." I continue.

"Leaving the airport?" Takashi asks back.

"Yes, we are going to clear Busujima's mansion and stay there, the place is supposed to be like a fortress" I respond.

"I see. That, is probably for the better. I, I need to care of Rei. They should be safer with you" Takashi then speaks up as he lowers his head.

"They won't let Rei's father leave yet, and I am not going to leave Rei behind." He adds.

"Figured as much, just came to inform you so you don't find out that everybody is gone the hard way." I answer as I fold my arms.

"I, see..." Takashi just lowers his head slightly, then turns to look at Rei.

A few seconds passed in silence, before I finally turned to leave.

"Ah, Naier! Wait." Takashi takes a step away from the door, before stopping again. I stopped walking and turned to look at him without turning around.

"I, am sorry." He adds as he lowers his head.

"For nearly killing me because I should be responsible for my actions? For nearly letting Saya get raped because she is no longer part of your group? For still running after Saeko's ass after she already picked who she wants? For forgetting that you are the leader of the group and locking yourself down here?" I 'ask'. Takashi just, turned to away.

"Take care Takashi." I add flatly and start to walk.

(... I really wonder if you would have done better than me had I not done anything and just acted like a third wheel to your story. But, this is no longer your story...)

And with that, I headed back up, out of the underground 'prison'. Leaving Takashi and Rei behind.

Upon exiting the structure, I found my group standing idly by the corner of the building, next to a bench, chatting.

"Did I miss anything?" I ask as I walk up to them. Rika, who was sitting next to Shizuka on the bench turned to shake her head at me, next to Shizuka was Alice, who was still hiding from me.

"Rikaaa, pay attention. I need to see your wound to make sure it's not infected." Shizuka then continues as she tugs at Rika's shoulder.

"In the car ok? Don't feel like stripping here." Rika shakes her head as she glances at the pouty Shizuka.

"Hm, about time you stopped being a pervert." Saya, who was with her back to me scoffs.

"Now you're just tempting me pinky pie." Rika chuckles as she starts playing with her zipper.

"Don't call me that!" Saya quickly retorts as she glares at Rika.

"What? Only your little boyfriend can? I call that discrimination." Rika arks an eyebrow as she smirks.

"N,no!" Saya quickly blurts out.

"No as he is the only one that can or no as he can't?" Rika puts her finger on her lips as she tilts her head.

"Aaaagghhh! I'm surrounded by idiots!" Saya folds her arms as she turns to look away.

"Hah, you sure bounced back fast though, figured you would be cuddling up to Naier for much longer." Rika casually leans back in her seat as she speaks.

"S,shut up. I'm not some weak-willed idiot." Saya scoffs as she keeps looking away.

(But you were latched on to me for several hours...)

Seeing how our pinkete was about to blow up, I decided to not say that out loud, lest I ended up taking the brunt of it...

"Asami does not understand what's wrong with cuddling. She likes cuddling with Khota all day..." Asami then speaks up. Who was as a matter of fact, with her hand warped around Khota's free arm. Saya just responds with 'Hummf!'

"Uhh, I don't mean to ruin the moment, but have you decided 'how' we will move about?" I ask as I fold my arms.

"What do you mean?" Rika asks back.

"Exactly what I asked. How are we going to go to the mansion? First us three, then come back and pick the others? Will Shizuka drive along with a second car? We will all go in one go and they will wait in the car?" I ask again.

"Already planning ahead huh." Rika closes her eyes as she turns her head to 'look' at the sky.

"Actually, I think I can help during the initial clean-up." Khota speaks up.

"I can restock the empty magazines with bullets, Asami too." He continues.

"Hmm, that is as long as we stay in the car." I respond.

"Right..." Khota nods slightly and lowers his head, seemingly thinking.

(... He's honest to God thinking how to help huh? I'm impressed...)

"Shizuka could drive after we get off." Rika then speaks up, her eyes still closed.

"The doors are probably locked. And if they are not, they will have to be closed after we get in. Better than running back and forth to get the car." She continues.

"So we go as a single team huh?" I ask.

"Seems like the best idea for now." Rika opens her eyes and lets her head fall down, then, closes her eyes again.

"... Rika, are you going to fall asleep on that bench? Or as you dying on us?" I ask as keep looking at the sniper. Causing Shizuka to, slightly freak out.

By slightly I mean she grabbed Rika and started shaking her. While shouting her name...

"AaaAAaa! I'm fine stop shaking me! I just didn't sleep well! I'll sleep in the car!" Rika raises her hands in surrender as Shizuka keeps staring at her friend with a worried expression.

"Naier, please don't scare our doctor. Alright?" She adds as she takes a deep breath. I just raised my hands.

"Hmm, are you finished with Takashi?" And a new female voice speaks up from behind me. Turning to it, I find Saeko, standing right behind me with a casual smile. Her father right next to her.

(Oh f! How many times will you freaking sneak up on me?!)

"Uhh, yea..." I answer with a slight nod.

"Then you are ready to head off." Saeko's father adds and nods slightly.

"If they have stocked up the car then yea." I answer as I turn to the old man.

"Take me to it." He pretty much demands as folds his arms behind his back...

... And so, after a few minutes of walking, we were in front of the car.

Matsudo loading a few boxes that were set next to inside the trunk.

"When will the car be ready?" Saeko's father speaks up the moment we stop, Matsudo turning to look at the old man.

"Oh! Mister Busujima! These are the last boxes. We loaded the car with two crates of ammo, one of MRE. Along with some dynamite." Matsudo responds as he wipes his forehead.

(More dynamite? How many fucking tons of dynamite does Saya's dad have?)

"I'd like to request that we are also given some seeds with easy to grow, fast-growing vegetables." The old man responds.

"Uhh, of course." The chubby mechanic nods and turns to walk away from the car.

"Take this as the extra help I can give you. Seed of edible foods, especially ones that grow fast, are a very precious resource right

now." Saeko's father then turns to me.

"I gave my daughter a map with how to get to my estate. Don't lose it. Or you are more likely to get lost the moment you have to go off-road." He adds.

"We have to go off-road?" I ask as I tilt my head.

"I told you, that house was not meant to be easily reachable. It is essentially surrounded by forest. If you stay cautious, such as not opening the windows with the lights open in the middle of the night. It could be impossible to spot. Plus, the cables to it all run underground, so it's not like somebody can follow any pylons that lead to it." He adds as he strokes his chin.

(... This guy, must have had a lot of enemies...)

"The first thing I want you to do after you clear it is to go to the top floor, the room straight ahead after the stairs should have a radio room, use the coordinates I written on the back of the map to contact me." He then turns to look around.

"I need not mention. These coordinates are not the same as the ones that the military uses. They link with a radio I have, so use it sparingly after we make a connection." He adds.

"Then, I will tell you about our next step." He continues as he turns to leave.

"Do not fail at this, and you will be among the few that will be able to relax during this crisis." And with these last words, he left.

"... Relaxing does sound nice." I sigh as I fold my arms.

"Second that." Rika adds.

(So this is it huh. Do this and you can supposedly sit on your ass all day eating samiches...)

One the road, for the final time

Review answers

FreakyFreek - I have long since stopped excessively proofreading the chapters because it took too much time. So spelling is eventually gonna spill through.

rharper909- you're welcome.

Malguss123- I think I had Saeko mention that he was acting distant, did I not? I can't exactly have him go f-k all and have him spend casual time with the girls in the same place one of em almost got raped at.

HectorFenyx, OechsnerC - Thank you.

MashiroNguyen- As much as I don't want to put smut for a quick hype, same way I don't want to start killing people off for the feels.

Nightwl129 - Daum, you must know my story better than me by now xD. And, there's a time and a place for everything.

joebruhgat- If I drop it or not really depends on how much free time I got. Since you know. I can't exactly spend the time I allocate to stuff that brings me an actual income to do this. There's a bigger chance I'll make a soft end and leave it at that. But if you do hunt me down, bring me a burger or something xD

Notableword - So people can question his sanity and life decisions.

IncognitMan- Thank you. Now for how long, or often I can write this honestly depends on how much time/energy I got left after work xD

Darkcore42- Making every part mentioned in the story be an important part of the story would make it rather predictable, maybe they will show up, maybe they won't. Maybe the 'grown-ups' will have

to deal with them. Or maybe they just choked on a chicken nugget
0.0

"Net, check. Ammo, check. Seeds, check. Fuel, check." Kohta was sitting inside the Humvee, turned towards the trunk's insides, checking everything placed in the Humvee.

"Since we will have to go off-road, I think it's better if we take a left here. We'll have to circle around the block here, but the sooner we leave the urban area and have the forest next to us, the better. Plus, the chances of getting ambushed in the open is far smaller than getting ambushed in a clogged-up street surrounded by walls." Meanwhile, I, along with Rika, Saeko, and Saya were checking the map that we placed on the humvee's hood.

"True. But if we're going off the road so soon, it's better for me to drive. Shizuka never drove off-road." Rika responds.

"Hummm? Whaaat? I didn't hear you! " And the moment Shizuka heard her name, she leans out of the driver's open door to look at us. Rika just shakes her hand at the nurse, who just tilts her head as she blinks a couple of times, before leaning back into the car.

"If Shizuka or Rika drives, what will the rest do?" Saya then asks.

"Kohta and Asami can stay with Alice and the dog in a corner, probably in the trunk? We still have some space in it. And it'll be a good spot to restock the magazines should the need arise. Rika will be in the front, in case they need to switch with Shizuka and can't exit the car. I'll be back center to have a fast reach of the hatch. Since I'm the one left who's a relatively good shot. So you and Saeko stay by sides on the back seats." I respond as I tap the humvee's hood.

"And who will read the map?" Saeko asks right after.

"The co-driver, so Rika, or Shizuka." I respond, then turn to look at Rika.

"Shizuka, can read a map right?" I ask as I keep staring at the sniper.

"Uhhh. I think? Maybe?..." Rika chuckles as she shrugs.

"Shizuka! Do you know how to read a map?" I ask as I turn toward the blond nurse.

"A cat? Ohh I had a little one when I was in high school. I named her fluffer~ She was a..." And Shizuka starts talking about a, cat?

"... She can seat in the trunk with the rest. Or drive..." I sigh as I turn to Rika while Shizuka was still talking.

"... Yea. Ok..." Rika just nods slightly. I then turn back to Shizuka.

"And that's why must never feed your cat turnips!" Shizuka, was still speaking...

"Hey Naier! Come check this out a sec!" And just then Kohta leans out the back door and waves at me, holding something in his hand.

I glance at the girls before walking to the back door. Shizuka, still narrating the great adventures of Fluffer the cat...

"Man, check this out!" He excitedly hands me what seemed to be a relatively big cellphone in a cover? A stray cable dangling under it. Though the moment I opened said cover, I ended up finding that it unfolded into a six parts. And, there was no screen on the 'phone' itself. The reason, simple. That was no phone.

"A solar power bank?" I ask.

"Yea! We found it in the box with the seeds packs! There's also an mp3 player inside! And a few cables! And small speaker!" Kohta

leans back into the car before Asami gives him the stuff he was shouting about.

"Music huh. That's something I didn't expect to hear for some time." I respond as I check the power bank cable.

(Too small to charge the laptop though. And, speaking of it...)

"Saya, do we still have the laptop?" I ask as I turn to the front.

"Oh, uhhh. Yea, it's in Saeko's bag. I gave it to her after. You know..." Saya glances about before lowering her head slightly.

"You want me to check if it fits the laptop? I, don't think this is strong enough to power it though." Kohta continues.

"I know, just 'remembered' that we had it." I respond as I shake my head, then give the power bank back to Kohta.

"Wonder if somebody forgot it in the box while packing the stuff up." I add as I fold my arms.

"Should we ask?" Kohta asks back.

"... Can I see the mp3?" I ask back. Kohta just nods and hands me the device.

Clicking the power button, I find that the thing actually still worked.

(Huh, wonder where this thing was stuffed at...)

With that thought, I checked the contents...

(... Hip hop, heavy metal, rap, classic, instrumental, jazz, blues, country, funky, disco, J-pop, rock, noise... Uhh, too many things inside...)

"If they figure out they lost it before we leave, give it back, otherwise. Ehh..." I answer as I hand it back.

"That is stealing though..." Asami mumbles as she folds her arms.

"If it's that important, they will come looking for it. Otherwise. If the previous owner does not care enough to keep an eye on their shit, I ain't gonna take extra steps for them." I answer as I turn to leave. Kohta turning to speak with Asami in the mean time.

"Music huh? Don't mind if I do actually." Rika chuckles as walks back to the Humvee's hood...

"Not going to disagree with that." I nod as I turn to look at the map

"Did it have any genre you like to listen to?" Saeko asks right after.

"Uhh, it did have some interesting genres inside." I respond as I keep looking at the map.

"What do you even 'like' to hear." Saya asks right after.

"Usually? Instrumental, heavy metal, epic. Overall though, I prefer stuff with no lyrics. Video game music also falls in that category too I guess." I answer.

"So you don't listen to like ninety-five percent of all the genres." Saya scoffs slightly as she folds her arms.

"Also, sea shanties and uhh pirate songs?" I add as I shrug.

"... What..." Saya frowns slightly as she arcs an eyebrow at me.

"How do these even connect..." She adds as she tilts her head with an arched eyebrow. I just shrug again in response.

"And classical is not bad either I guess." I continue.

"Aaah? Now you're just trying to confuse me..." Saya groans as her expression turn into a half-opened mouth frown. I shrug, yet again.

And, silence...

"I like jazz and classical, though I prefer American Jazz over J-Jazz. Then again, I can probably hear anything. Except for Disco and funky, never stuck with me for some reason." Rika speaks up.

"Not much of a selection if you listen to everything." Saya lets out a small sigh through her nose.

"Hmm? What do 'you' listen to then?" Rika asks back.

"Uhh, I. I listen to uhh..." Saya mumbles as she glances at me.

"Heavy metal..." She adds as she averts her eyes.

"... You're pulling my leg." Rika chuckles as she turns to Saya.

"N, no I'm not!" Saya retorts.

"Name me five metal groups then." Rika continues as she grins. Saya just blinks blankly at Rika...

"Uhh, ummm..." Saya mumbles as she glances about...

"Ughh! Fine! I like J-pop! Happy now?" Saya folds her arms as she turns her head away. Rika just kept chuckling, before turning to Saeko.

"How about you?" She asks.

"In my house, we usually listened to traditional and classical music." Saeko responds calmly.

"Yes, and what do 'you' like to hear?" Rika asks again.

"I, never really looked into other genres to be honest. I didn't mind what everybody else was listening to at school though.." Saeko answers.

"Oh my, that's no good." Rika tilts her head slightly as she arcs an eyebrow.

I glance at Saeko, before turning to look at the map. Yet, I could now not shake off the feeling that something was, staring at me...

Lifting my head I find, Shizuka. Who had leaned out of the front seat. Staring at me, intensely. Well, not me, but towards the group in front of the Humvee...

"Uhh, Shizuk.."

"I like J-pop and Karaoke!" Shizuka blurts out as she cuts me off...

"Can we stop this stupid thing now? We need to leave as soon as possible." Saya groans as she turns to look at the map, making Shizuka give off a sad whine.

"Sadly, I agree, the more day we burn, the less day we'll have to get there. And I want to get there today. I don't care about fighting inside the house after it gets dark, since there should be electricity there, based on Saeko's dad at least..." I respond.

"You think there will be electricity there?" Saya asks.

"Ehh, I have hope. The house is relatively far from the mainland. And considering the emp blast originated quite further away from the opposite side of town, we have a good chance that the blast would have not completely totaled the house's electrics. If you consider that the airport was relatively ok even before repairs started. And the big problem, which was having a working power facility. Has been solved, now that we have the dam." Rika responds.

"... Won't we need an electrician though?" I ask.

"That, I don't know." Rika shrugs.

"If we had a book about it, I could do it." Saya then speaks up.

"Really?" I ask back.

"Well duh. I'm a genius." Saya scoffs.

"So you're absolutely sure you won't short circuit something by accident and turn the whole building into a Christmas tree?" I respond as I arch an eyebrow.

"W, well that's why I need the book stupid..." Saya mumbles as she glances away.

(Oh boy.)

"... So, where can we find a book like that?" I ask right after.

"I, don't know..." Saya responds as she folds her arms.

"We could raid a bookstore after we set a base there. Books are probably not among the things that people tried to loot. You can't eat them, and you can't kill with them, most of the time." Rika shrugs.

"True. So, we are, set?" I ask as I look at my new 'team'.

"I think so?" Rika nods.

"I am ready." Saeko responds.

"Me too..." Saya answers as well.

"Then. Let's get the fuck out of here..." I take a deep breath and take the map off the hood.

"Start the engine Shizuka!" I slap the hood as I walk towards the back seats...

"Ahhhh, wait wait wait!" Rika lifts both hands as she stops walking.

"Can somebody take my place until we reach the off-road part? I want to take that nap I mentioned." She continues.

"Now you figure you that want to take that nap?" Saya groans.

"Hey, I already said I'd sleep in the car didn't I?" Rika answers.

"I'd do it. But we need somebody who can shoot straight to take my place..." I respond.

"Uhh, fine, I'll take Rika's place." Saya groans.

"Alright, I owe you one~" Rika smiles as she heads to the back seats.

And so, we entered the Humvee.

Shizuka in the driver's seat, Saya in the front passenger with the map.

Me Saeko and Rika on the back. With Saeko behind the driver's seat me in the middle, and Rika behind the passenger's seat

And Kohta with Asami and Alice in the trunk. Oh and the dog.

And just as the car comes to life and starts moving.

"Are they going to let us leave like this?" Kohta asks as he leans on the backside of Rika's seat.

"We were never really part of the army so..." I keep looking ahead as I speak.

"Wait, Rika is not military?" Kohta asks back.

"No, she's a cop essentially, like Asami." I answer, Kohta letting out an 'oh'

Turning to glance at Rika, she was already with her head against the window, eyes closed.

And so, we drove past the main building, and headed towards the exit, the soldier there opening for us without really asking any questions.

"Good fucking riddance I suppose..." I sigh as we drove past the checkpoint, for what should be the final time.

Just then, I felt something tapping my left shoulder. Turning to it, I found Saeko, who had huddled herself up in the corner between her seat and the door. Leaving about half her seat free.

She then tapped her seat's backrest with a smile. While at the same time, Saya, who had turned around, was staring at Saeko with a narrowed-eyed, puffed-up frown.

"Ummm, where do I go now?" And then Shizuka spoke up with an apologetic tone. Saya just narrows her eyes even more as she puffs her cheeks further, before turning to sit normally and focusing on the map.

"Go right on the turn here. Roads this close to the airport should have been cleaned by the army." She responds.

(Well, don't mind if I do...)

I slide up next to Saeko and lean my back on the edge of her seat, Saeko then tightly wraps her arms around my arm and leans her head on my shoulder before closing her eyes.

(... Huh. This reminds me of the first time Saeko ended up sleeping on my shoulder, you know, where I acted as if I was asleep. Heh, no need to act now ah?)

I silently bring my free hand to the fringe of her hair and ruffle them. Saeko just let out a small giggle as she nuzzled her cheek against my shoulder.

"... Woaaa..." And what followed was a gasp of woe coming from the car's trunk.

Turning to look to my sides I found Kohta staring at me with his mouth wide open.

"What?" I ask as I arch an eyebrow.

"N, nothing." Kohta quickly looks back towards the crates.

"Really? Didn't seem like n, uhhh?..." And, I didn't manage to finish my sentence when I felt a sudden weight on my legs...

Upon looking at my legs, I found that Rika, who was off to dreamland, had essentially sprawled her legs on my thighs.

"Really now?..." I 'ask' as I keep staring at Rika's legs.

"You sure seem to be enjoying yourself..." A hissy voice then spoke up from the front. Turning my head up I found Saya staring, or more appropriately, glaring at me.

"You have a weird idea of enjoyable if you think I enjoy having somebody's dirty-ass boots on me. For the rest, not gonna comment..." I respond as glance at Saeko, then slowly take one of Rika's legs, and place it next to me. Only for her to just, stretch it back on my thighs the moment I let it go...

Saya just let out a haughty 'hummf!' and turned to look back to the front.

"I was the one that got assaulted, you're supposed to pay attention to me..." She whispers as she keeps staring at the map with a sulky look.

"I'll pay you all the attention you want once we clear the mansion." I answer flatly. Saya quickly turns to stare back at me with a slight blush on her face.

"Saaayaaaa. There's a crossroad ahead..." And Shizuka speaks up, causing Saya to turn back towards the front.

"By the way Saeko, what should we expect there? How big is the place?" I ask as I turn to the girl resting on my shoulder.

"Hmmm." She hums slightly before lifting her head and opening her eyes.

"As my father said. It is essentially surrounded by a wall, so if we are to take everything inside the wall as part of the house." She tilts her head slightly.

"There is a garage for two cars to the left of the main building, the main building is three stories tall. A small secondary garage that has the generator is to the right of the main building. Behind the main house is a small garden to its left, behind that garden we have a secondary warehouse that was left unused. And next to it, we have a dojo." Saeko calmly starts explaining. Meanwhile...

"... Is somebody in this car. Who is not filthy rich?" I ask as I chuckle.

"Umm, all I have is the house I share with Rika..." Shizuka speaks up.

"That place didn't look cheap either." I respond.

"Asami lived in a rented apartment..." Asami then continues.

"Finally, another person that I can relate to. Though I'd guess I was in a better position since I didn't actually pay the rent completely by myself." I chuckle.

"Realistically I do not own anything though. They are all my father's possessions." Saeko then speaks up.

Kohta did not speak, and neither did Saya. Well, at least she did not join the chat, since she just kept giving Shizuka instructions.

"Humm, where did you live before?" Shizuka asks as she glances back at me before looking back ahead towards the street.

"Hm? Rented apartment." I respond.

"Ummm, no. I mean, before that..." She asks again...

"Shizuka!" And Saya quickly turns to glare at the nurse.

"W, what?! I'm, I'm sorry!" Shizuka lowers her head and raises her shoulders, looking a lot like a scolded puppy.

"You can't ask that!" Saya answers as she keeps staring at our driver.

"W, why?..." Shizuka asks with confusion written on her face. Saya just rolls her eyes with a loud groan.

"He's a transfer student you idiot." Saya blurts out as she narrows her eyes at Shizuka...

"Oh. Ohhhh... Ahhh! I'm, I'm sorry!" Shizuka quickly darts her head to me as she apologizes, her eyes wide with surprise.

"Oi! Eyes on the road." I respond as I point at the front windshield.

"I'm sorry..." Shizuka lets out a sad whine as she turns to look back towards the road ahead with her head drooping.

"Besides, they are probably dead by now anyway." I respond.

"Hey! Don't say that!" Saya then turns to look at me, looking, irked?

"Yea, if they are half as badass as you they are probably chilling on some beach!" Kohta then adds.

"You mean they are complaining to each other on some beach..." I chuckle.

"How can you even joke about that..." Saya mumbles as she turns to look away.

"Because the alternative ain't gonna help anybody." I answer flatly.

"Why are you guys shouting so much..." Rika mumbles as she stretches...

"We've been talking about how casually you shoved your boots on me." I respond as I turn to Rika.

"Hmm..." Rika just lets a small moan as she changes her posture. Essentially not giving a fuck.

And so, we kept driving. Thankfully without any real blocks down the road...

Up until, about thirty minutes later.

"Ohh! I can see the forest at the end of the next intersection!" Shizuka speaks up.

"Yea, turn left in that intersection. See if we can keep going for a few blocks before we'll have to take the dirt road." Saya responds as she runs her finger across the map.

"Should we wake up Rika then? Though I don't know how much help thirty minutes of sleep will be..." I ask.

"No need. We will keep going on the road until going off-road is necessary. I know we said to go off-road as soon as possible, but the roads have been clear so far..." Saya answers. I just nod back...

"By the way, does the map have any points of interest on it? You know, stores and the such?" I ask after a few seconds.

"Uhhhh, no." Saya shakes her head.

"I see. Saeko?" I then turn my head slightly to my left. Yet, get no response.

"Uhh, Saeko?" I ask again as I lean my head away to get a better look. To find that it was not only Rika that was off to dreamland...

"..." I just blink a couple of times before turning to look back towards the front, where Saya had turned to stare at the sleeping Samurai.

"She gets to sleep on your shoulder. I get to read the damn map..."
She mumbles as she turns to look back ahead.

"Why do I always have to pull the short end of the stick. It's not fair..." She whines as she keeps looking at the map with a sulky face.

"Because a genius can do everything. And we're short-staffed." I respond.

"Hmf..." Saya just blew some air through her nose as she kept her eyes on the map, looking as sulky as ever as silence returned to the car.

Without really anything to do, I turned to look out the window next to Saeko, as Shizuka took a left on the intersection. The buildings to our left, the trees to our right...

The roads were smeared with blood, and the buildings, which were mostly if not all stores, were without a single intact window in sight, which honestly gave the impression that a large group scavenged this place, their insides being a mess which added to that proof. Along with the most important fact, the roads were clear. The cars and bodies that should have been littering it were seemingly shoved to the side of the road.

(It's almost as if somebody used a plow truck and pushed everything off the bloody street. Sure, a few stray corpses have walked up into the road again, but you'd need to be blind to actually hit them...)

-THUD-

(Which, makes me wonder...)

-THUD-

(Why...)

-THUD-

(Is Shizuka...)

-THUD-

(running over...)

-THUD-

(every single)

-THUD-

(Corpse...)

"Ughhh! Can you stop running over everything?! All that bumping is distracting me!" Until Saya snapped at least...

"Shizuka's all bloodthirsty now." I chuckle.

"I'm, I'm not bloodthirsty! I just..."

"Racking up points to buy the next upgrade..." I cut her off with a slight snicker, Kohta chuckling from inside the trunk.

"Muuu! Stop teasing me you meany!" Shizuka puffs her cheeks as she turns to glance at me. I just chuckle and turn to look out the window again.

"You, sure get along with a lot of girls Naier..." Kohta then adds...

(... Kohta...)

"Yes, you sure do..." Saya adds as she turns to stare at me with narrowed eyes.

(You foking traitor..)

"I plead the fifth..." I respond as I keeps looking out the window.

"This just proves that you admit that you're a criminal." Saya smirks slightly as she leans her head towards me narrowing her eyes.

"The evil penguin is now on trial. But you shall never find about my evil plan." I sigh as I drop my head, and, much to my surprise, it was the voice of a small girl that started chuckling from the trunk. Aka, Alice...

And, as Saya turns to look ahead again...

"Oh, Shizuka stop. We reached the point where we need to turn." She taps Shizuka as she notices a small dirt road extending towards the forest to our right.

"Umm, I need to drive off-road?..." Shizuka grips the wheel with both hands as she leans her head over the wheel, looking at the dirt road.

"We should wake up Rika." I add.

"Yes." Saya replies flatly.

"No, I can do it. Rika needs to rest" Shizuka replies as she shakes her head.

"Not the time to be headstrong Shizuka, one misstep in there and we lose our car and supplies." I respond as I poke Saeko's cheek. Who in turn lets out a small moan and slowly opens her eyes, focusing them on me. Before backing off and stretching her back.

I then lean to my right, towards Rika, and shake her shoulder.

"Five more minutes..." She groans as she tries to shoo me with her hand.

"You'll sleep all you want on a normal bed after we clear the mansion. Come on, we have corpses strolling toward us." I respond as I shake her again.

"Uhhh, right. Right. Yeah..." Rika nods a couple of times as she slowly gets up. Rubbing her eyes before pushing her hands up against the car's roof to stretch.

I take a deep breath and get up, opening the hatch.

"We have corpses near the car. I'll go to the roof to clear some space, change places without exiting the car." I add as I climb out through the hatch. Then proceed to sit, rotating the hatch and using the lid as a backrest.

Then I turn my attention to the few corpses that had reached the car and were essentially rubbing their faces on the window.

(If project zomboid taught me anything. Is that I also need to be near a forest to set rabbit traps and that cabbage is amazeballs. So I guess the fact the building is surrounded by forest will mean we will have a good chance to catch game. Though on the other hand, we will have reduced visibility if a horde comes toward us. The trees will cover them. Hmm, then again, if trees are too close to the outside wall, we could go get a chainsaw from a store and cut them down, then use the trees as an extra barricade to surround the building...)

"Naier. They have switched places, you can come down." Saeko then pops up from the hatch as she speaks.

"Hmm, I'd say that I'd like to stay up here. But the idea of getting a tree branch to my face while the car is going does not sound too fun..." I nod and turn to enter the humvee again.

As I climbed down, I saw Rika lazily stretching in the driver's seat.

"So, I just follow the dirt path?" Rika asks.

"No, the path itself actually leads to a dead-end, it heads northeast. The house is straight north." Saya responds as she shakes her head.

"Do we have a compass?" Rika asks again.

"In my bag." I respond as I turn to Kohta, who nods and hands me my bag.

Opening the front pocket, I took out the compass I got, the same one that the employee asked me if I wanted to buy, back right before the outbreak started...

(Huh, guess I owe that employee one now.)

I chuckle slightly as I look at the compass, then hand it to Rika.

"Nice, now, let's go. I call dibs on the best double bed!" Rika exclaims as she slaps the gas with her foot.

"Do you need to shout?" Saya groans.

"I'll fall asleep if I don't." Rika shrugs as she chuckles.

"By the way miss Busujima. Asami would like to ask if she can know how many bedrooms the house has." Asami then speaks up.

"All the bedrooms are on the second floor. There are, hmm. Nine, counting two bathrooms in as well." Saeko responds.

"We are talking about the whole house, or just the second floor now?" I ask as I glance at Saeko.

"Hmm? The second floor?" Saeko answers as she tilts her head questionably.

"Hah, guess commando knew his game. Going after the richest girls in his group" Rika adds with a laugh.

"Oi, you make me sound like a gold digger now..." I groan as I drop my shoulders.

"Humf, that idiot probably doesn't have the brains to make such an elaborate scheme." Saya huffs.

"Thanks? I think?" I respond as I arch an eyebrow and tilt my head.

"Question. I know we're going off-road. But how 'off-road' is the path? A straight line through a flat forested area? Rocky terrain? Cliffs?" Rika then asks.

"There should be some turns based on what the map has drawn on it, we should also have to pass a shallow river two times." Saya responds as she looks at the map.

"It should also be slightly uphill. I remember a zig-zagging path right before to the house" Saeko added.

"River huh. If it's not too far it could be good for some fishing. Considering we can't exactly go to the supermarket anymore." I continue as I put one hand behind me and lean back.

"If I remember correctly, it must be ten to twenty minutes on foot." Saeko responds as she turns to me.

(This place keeps getting better and better.)

"And none of your father's acquaintances know of the place?" I ask back.

"I don't think so. He usually went there when he wanted to get away from his daily life." Saeko shakes her head as a response.

"Ahh, Saya dear. Can't go north from here, rock formation." Rika then speaks up as she stops the humvee.

"Go northwest. We should find the river if we keep going like that. After you find it, we need to find a shallow spot to pass, then go along with it towards the north, until the river turns towards the east. Then, we will have to drive through it again." Saya responds.

"Why not just drive next to the river without passing? You know, from the opposite side." Rika asks.

"Don't ask me, it's what the map says." Saya shrugs.

"Maybe that side of the river is undrivable..." She adds.

"Oh well, northwest it is." Rika shrugs back and turns the wheel...

(We will have to do this trip each time we want to go to the city? Double-edged sword. Hard to go to, hard to leave from. But I'd rather sleep peacefully at night knowing that we don't have panting survivors staring at the girls...)

Roadtrip through the woods

The Commissar 13- Considering they're in a car, it'd be the zombies that'll wish they ain't a thing.

derethl2- Had plans to use some gameplay moments of it in my story for extra chapters(Mostly for either a scavage run or a daily life chapter), sadly they're now just another scrapped idea as I'm focusing more on making some sort of 'soft end' for the story. Because I want to start writing a story about Tales of Vesperia/MGE since it's the thing I'm working on my 3d Ptron and I have 3d models of these characters made, that would let me create some images for the story plus maybe give me a few ideas for some original characters I'm creating there. As much as I like Hotd, I'd rather have my focus on one franchise.

HectorFenyx- Well you reviewed, why would I not answer. And you're welcome xD.

REYZERO- Considering his meta-knowledge is pretty useless right now, it'd be hard for others to find out about it (Unless he facks up). And, think about it, if some random smuck walked up to you and told you to stuff he definitely should not have known. Then told you that he's from another world, would you believe him? Or just say that he's a hardcore stalker and call the cops. Aka nothing good can come out of it and sometimes ignorance is bliss.

ShikiRyougi- Thank you. And, as mentioned on my author page, I don't like writing r-18 steam. It's not that I can't, I need to have tried something to not like it. It's just that, I don't like writing it.

OechsnerC,joebruchgat, Guest1- Thank you.

Mau160 - Well, it will be finished, one way or another.

Nananen Gurai - The story usually updates once every month/three months, if you want to skip the update check. And yea, Naier is supposed to be a commoner, or at least from a middle-class family (That can afford to send him abroad). Though having a rich ass family that sends half an army to find him would be a fun spin-off.

Jub-erth- Yea, this story has become much bigger than I expected. And if you do make something, I'll post a link to it if you want.

CarLost- There are still some stuff that need to happen, so it'll continue for now.

Gaddyboy- He's a fanatic mask believer worship the masked god you heretic.

Brozeph - If I took to heart every dude that got pissed because the story didn't go their way I'd have stopped long ago xD. Now, since I write way too sporadically, I essentially wing it. Saya 'will' get a role that fits her, or at least I think it'd fit her. And well, the latest chapters probably got some spelling, since I'm not proofreading them that much anymore.

Guest that wants his fix- Free stuff never arrived on time, what can I do.

a crashclown- Yea the start of the story does not diverge too much from canon, being it my first story I was initially just aiming for 10-20 chapter story without much of a story to tell, mostly to work on my spelling/writing. This behemoth just, 'appeared'

Diametrik- I'll give ye points for Originality. First person so far to whine about this. Have a cookie.

Guest that is Kinda amazed- What can I say, I like Hotd and wanted more, but nobody gave me more, so I made more myself xD.

-Random J-pop song playing-

Music was coming off from the small speaker placed in the middle of the car. Said car passing through a shallow point of a river.

Meanwhile I was sitting, or more like laying against the hatch's lid on the roof of the car. watching at a tree line that was now behind us.

"Guess this is why we needed to pass the river huh..." I whisper to myself.

As Saya guessed, the side of the river we came from had way too many thick trees for a bike, much less a car to pass. While the other side past the river had a relatively flat plain that ran along the river. The plain itself was not too big, as the woods took over again the moment you strayed too far from the river, but it was big enough to fit two to three cars next to each other.

Also.

"And not a single corpse in sight." I add as I fold my arms and glance around.

And it was not just now, after we went off-road the number of corpses got drastically reduced. We did spot one or two occasionally. But they looked more like survivors that made a last-ditch effort to run away after getting infected, rather than corpses that wandered into the forest.

"Naier?" And a female voice speaks up from behind me.

Turning around I find Saeko peeking from behind the hatch's lid, holding a closed M.R.E bar towards me.

"Hmm? Ah, thanks." I nod as I take the bar.

"Mind if I join you?" She asks right after as she keeps standing in the hatch.

I respond by sliding a little bit to the side, leaving some space on the hatch's lid, then tap the lid, essentially copying what she did when

she offered me to sit next to her inside the Humvee.

Saeko didn't respond, she just silently climbed up and scooted next to me. Folding her legs under her and leaning on me instead of using the hatch lid.

"How many should we expect inside?" I ask.

Saeko did not respond.

"Can we, not talk about what we will have to do to survive for a bit?..." She asks she absentmindedly narrows her eyes towards the distance, placing her head on my shoulder.

"Feeling drained?" I ask as I wrap my arm around her.

"I, was terrified." She answers flatly as she keeps looking in the distance.

"When Saya told me that your whole team got killed I..." She mutters as she lowers her head.

"And this is why we left. So we don't have to deal with situations like these anymore." I answer as I pat her shoulder.

"I thought we left because Saya got assaulted?" Saeko responds with a questioning tone.

"She got assaulted because I got sent to the other side of town and because in that place pre-outbreak status overrides post-outbreak actions. As a matter of fact, I think that the 'We let your friends get preferential treatment because you work for it' lolipop that they kept sucking was a bunch of hot air. If I had to guess, it was because you and Saya had important parents that they let us use these rooms. Thus why you got kicked out the moment somebody more 'important' arrived." I answer as I sigh.

"At least now, we will be the ones making the rules in that house." I add as the humvee finally reached the other side of the river and

turned left, now driving with the trees to its right, and the river to its left.

We then drove on for a few minutes...

"I don't know how many we should expect. The house was not supposed to have people in it. But since my father knew it was overrun. Maybe he let some of his acquaintances use it for some reason. Or, he actually let the infected in to deter survivors from trying to claim it." Until Saeko spoke up.

"... I'm not going to ask if he was willing to do that since you just mentioned it..." I glance at the purple-haired girl before looking ahead again.

"My father is a man that puts results means used to acquire said results. This is why he trusted you. Because you got the results he expected of you." Saeko responds.

"Ends justify the means huh." I take a deep breath as I tilt my head.

"You don't agree with that theory?" Saeko asks back.

"Nothing is ever black and white. I'm old enough to know that there is always a trade-off to getting the desired results. The question is, how big is that trade-off." I answer.

And like that, silence returned. Saeko closed her eyes as the car kept moving towards its destination...

... About thirty minutes later, we reached the point that the river turned towards the right, in other words, the point that the car had to go swimming again.

Yet instead of going straight into the river, Shizuka turned to the right to follow the river again.

The reason was that the shallow point turned out to be further down, a rocky, seemingly man-made path made up of pebbles. The height

of the water there turned to be about half a wheel on height after Shizuka turned to drive on it.

(Hmm, this place could be good for fishing, since you have more exit points, plus the noise of the water could disorient the corpses if you are silent enough. Though on the flip side that same noise could attract them. Not that I have seen any corpses for some time now...)

Looking straight ahead, I saw that the rocky path led to a path that went straight into the forest again, thankfully big enough for the humvee to enter.

"Saeko." I shake the girl next to me slightly as I turn towards her, Saeko silently lifts her head and turns to look at me.

"We should go back down. You know, tree branches and all." I motion with my head towards the forest ahead of us. Saeko just nods and turns to climb down the hatch. With me following shortly after. The sound of music getting louder now that I was back inside the vehicle...

"Oh, back from your date?" Rika asks as I climb down. Much to Saya's displeasure. I, just ignored the smirking Rika.

"How much further after we enter the forest again?" Khota then asks.

"Halfway." Saya answers flatly.

"Still, won't a helicopter be able to see this place?" Khota then asks.

"I suppose. But just because one thief can break open your door because he has a diamond pickaxe, are you going to leave it open for evrybody to enter?" I answer.

"Uhh, yeah, I guess not. " Khota nods as he responds.

"Besides, we have two snipers here. Just snipe the pilot." I add with a shrug.

"Ehh I could probably do it, as long as I'm not this fucking tired." Rika chuckles.

"Maaan, I can't wait until we clear the house and I get to sleep on a soft bed. I'll sleep for a damn century." She then continues as she closes her eyes slightly.

"Hey! You're still driving don't close your eyes!" Saya shouts.

"Relax, I can see where I'm going." Rika answers as she opens her eyes again.

"Muuu, I told you I could drive. You need rest." Shizuka pouts as she folds her arms under her oversized chest.

"It's fine. Though my butt is a bit itchy." Rika shrugs.

"Thought the wound was at your hip." I respond as I tilt my head.

"Huh? Never said it was the wound that bothered me, just that my butt is itchy." Rika glances at me with a stupid smirk before looking back ahead. I just sigh in response.

"Can we stop talking about stupid butts and focus? You all can be idiots after we have a safe place to rest." Saya groans.

"Oi, my butt is not stupid. It went to college with me, and graduated." Rika turns to narrow her eyes at Saya. Who rolled her eyes.

"Just, keep driving..." Saya responds as she focuses back on the map.

And just then, the song changed to a new one.

"Oh-oh-oh! I like this song!" Shizuka turns to glance at Khota, who had the mp3 in his hand.

Shizuka then, much to the surprise of nobody started 'dancing', or more like swaying her upper body to the rhythm of the music.

What was a surprise, was that when the lyrics started, she started singing as well.

And what was even more surprising, was that she was actually good at singing...

"Wait, Shizuka can sing?" I ask as I tilt my head in confusion.

"Well, she did say she liked karaoke." Rika answers.

"I know people that like Karaoke too, but they sound like deaf pigs." I respond.

"H, huh?! I, I sound like a deaf pig?!" Shizuka then abruptly stops singing and turns to stare at me. A mixture of shock, surprise, and disheartenment on her face. Hell, there were even tears forming in the corner of her eyes.

"Uhh, no. I said that I'm surprised that you can actually sing, since other people I know who liked karaoke sounded like deaf pigs." I respond.

"Oooh. I, see." Shizuka responds, then starts glancing around.

A few seconds of silence then passed...

"You won't sing again?" Khota asks.

"I, can't. It's embarrassing now..." Shizuka mumbles. Causing the rest of the group to start chuckling.

"Ah, Rika, I see a gap in the trees to the right, take the turn." Saya then points ahead as she keeps looking through the windshield.

"I really want to see how we will make this trip again without getting lost..." Rika mumbled as she took the turn.

"Good question. Maybe we should leave marks behind? Not obvious ones, because I'm paranoid. The river part is easy enough to

remember since it has natural points we can lean on, but inside the forest? I honestly already forgot how we got through the first part of it already." I ask.

"Hmm, we could tie some cloth on it and make the binding point towards the direction we need to turn." Khota responds.

"... Wish we could just use a Gps..." Saya groans.

"Gps works now? After the emp?" Asami asks back.

"Think so. When the big wings arrived at the airport. They came with their private, shiny latest edition jets. These things used Gps. Since one of our engineers was grumbling that they 'requested' to take the GPS hardware from these jets and install them into the bigger airliners, since theirs was fried. You can guess how well that ended." Rika chuckles back.

"So, in other words, if we find a store that sells car accessories and find a working GPS screen. We'd be set." I respond.

"Yep." Rika answers back.

"Uhh, we should have asked for one before we left..." Khota mumbled.

"Nobody thought of it, what can you do." I shrug.

"We should make a list of what we will need. I'd like to avoid making this trip multiple times. Gps or not." Rika adds right after.

"I agree on that." I continue as I nod.

"So, about the markings..." Rika then asks as she slows down the car.

"Let's do what Khota said, we can remove them after we find a working GPS." I respond.

"Ok, what should we use?" Khota asks.

"Just pick a shirt and rip it. I'd say use one of mine. But I don't think black is a good color for a sign in the middle of a forest..." I answer as I shrug.

"Ok!" Khota then nods enthusiastically and turns to shuffle through one of the bags...

"Ah! Found something!" He exclaims and pulls...

"..."

A purple lace panty...

"That is mine. And is not a shirt Hirano." Saeko then speaks up.

"Aaaaaa, s, sorry!" Khota quickly shoves the underwear back inside the bag, before pulling a red shirt.

"Can, we use this?" He asks, this time with a rather timid tone.

"If nobody got any red shirts in there, then this is mine. Use it." Saya responds.

"Though can I ask why my clothes have Saeko's in as well?" She continues.

"I put all our clothes in one bag to save space." Rika answers.

"What?! Why didn't you tell me that you were fiddling through my stuff!" Saya blurts out as she turns to glare at Rika.

"Relax, I didn't throw any of that sexy underwear you hid in the side pocket." Rika answers casually again. Which got followed by...

Let's just call it a siren blare.

"... Let's go mark the tree." I point at the door next to Saeko as I keep staring at Saya, who was trying to get ahold of Rika's neck.

"Uhh, yea, here. I can't come with since I'll slow you down." Khota hands me a long, red ripped sheet he made with a knife from the shirt.

"I, I don't have any weird underwear in my bag!" Saya shouts as me and Saeko exit the car.

"Let's get done with this fast. We don't know if there are corpses around there." I speak up as I close the door, Saeko next to me.

"Agreed." Saeko nods back.

And so, we ran to where Rika took the turn, picked the first tree that would probably be visible when coming down the road with a car, and tied the red sheet on it.

"I see rustling further in." Saeko then spoke up as he slowly drew her blade.

"Almost. Ok, done." I respond as I back off the tree, then turn to look to where Saeko was looking.

... Only to see a pair of rabbits pop up from under a bush.

"Oh..." Saeko blinks a couple of times before sheathing her blade.

"Hmm, the forest has rabbits? Nice." I say as I nod, then turn to head towards the car, tapping Saeko on the shoulder.

"You like rabbits?" Saeko asks back.

"You'll like them too once we run out of meat." I answer with a chuckle.

"Ahh, good point. Rabbits should be easier to hunt compared to a boar or a deer." Saeko answers.

"Plus you know, they breed like, rabbits." I add as I open the Humvee's door.

"Who breeds like rabbits you pervert?!" And Saya, who was still going at it, turn to shout at me.

"Rabbits." I answer flatly as I take a seat, with Saeko following in.

"Ah?..." Saya just tilts her head with a confused expression.

"We saw a pair of rabbits. With hunting season now being just, us. It means we won't have a shortage of meat." I answer.

"You, you want to kill Rabbits?! But they're so cute!..." Shizuka exclaims as she turns to me with a worried expression.

"Well, you can munch on carrots while I'm making meat patties for burgers then..." I answer with a shrug.

"Ohhh, I'd kill for a double burger right now..." Rika sighs as she leans on the wheel.

"... Me too." Khota answers right after as he brings his hand to his stomach.

"... Ok now I'm getting hungry too, so let's drop it and keep going." I chuckle as I point forward.

"Hey, let's make burgers for the victory party after we lock down the building!" Khota then speaks up.

"Huh, we should add a meat grinder to the list of stuff we need." I add as I fold my arms.

"I'm pretty sure the kitchen there has one pre-installed." Saeko responds.

"We also still have the crossbow in the trunk, since they didn't take it. I guess it was not 'gun' enough." Khota adds as he turns to look

deeper into the trunk.

"Nice, that could come in handy." I add as I nod.

"Can we stop thinking what we will do 'after' we clear the place, and instead think how we will actually clear it?" Saya groans.

"Hahh, come on now, don't be a spoilsport. Though I guess you are technically correct..." Rika tilts her head as she speaks.

"I am not technically correct! I am just correct! And don't call me a spoilsport!" Saya then leans towards Rika as she taps at the map on her legs.

"Do we even know what we will face though?" Khota asks right after.

"My father mentioned only that the infected got inside." Saeko responds.

"Can't we just bait them out? Asami thinks that we could avoid needless danger if we did that instead of fighting them." Asami adds.

"Not a good idea. Unless you want to have corpses roaming around the woods near the house. Plus, I'm still not fully sure these things won't actually attack animals. They did get drawn to Zeke's barking after all..." I answer as I shake my head.

"But we have not seen a single animal that is one of them..." Khota adds right after.

"Maybe they are too fast to catch or are too small to have anything left over after they catch them. Or well, maybe the thing just doesn't work on em. We also did see a video with Saya when we were still at her house, before the E.M.P. A scientist in it mentioned that the whole thing might be lab bred because its transfer rate is too inefficient for it to have spread worldwide so fast. If that's true, then it could be an engineered bioweapon that got sold off to the wrong pair of hands." I continue.

"Really? I, never knew that..." Khota lowers his head slightly.

"Asami does not understand, even if it was a bioweapon, why ignore animals?" Asami asks right after.

"Because it would be detrimental. Let's say, that this was cooked up for the army, because only a government would have the funds and closed doors to make research this dodgy. Or a multi-billionaire. But either case, if it was made for war, it would be for attacking, as I can't think of a single good reason when bombarding your own nation with a Zombie virus will be efficient. So if it's to take out a hostile nation, you would want to take your opposition, aka, people. Killing pigs and cows would have had an actual detriment, since if the war was won then farming assets would belong to the winner." I answer.

"That theory is full of holes." Saya groans.

"Well, that's why it's a theory. For all we know it could be the Zetans counter-attacking after the lone wanderer blew up their death ray." I shrug.

"The who did what because of who?" Saya turns to me with a confused frown as she tilts her head.

"But hey, we could just check if it affects animals." I respond as I fold my arms.

"Huh, how?" Saya asks again.

"By giving PETA a reason to come knocking on our door." I add.

"You want to feed an animal to the corpses?..." Khota asks right after.

"Whhaaaaa! Naier you can't do that!" Shizuka then suddenly speaks up.

"Asami agrees with Shizuka. That is too cruel..." Asami adds right after.

"Would be good to definitively know if animals can get infected though, last thing I want is a zombified Doberman named Cerberus running after me." Rika chuckles.

"Smashing through windows..." Khota whispers right after...

"That was oddly specific. But, I do agree." Saeko then responds.

"We won't be any better than the bad guys if do something like this..." Alice mumbles as she hugs Zeke.

"Say what you want, but don't come crying to me if you flip your life on a coin and get the shit side of the bet." I shrug.

"We, we just need to be careful." Shizuka mumbles right after.

"What if they can bust through windows though..." Khota 'asks'...

"Ugghhhh! What's with you and dogs jumping through windows? What? Were you holding an umbrella when..."

"Pffft!..." Only to get caught off my me as I bring my hand to my face as I try to stop laughing.

"Why the hell are you laughing?!" Saya loudly 'asks' as she glares at me.

"Nothing, nothing. Just surprised at how divided we are on the matter." I shake my head.

"Hey I know, let's vote~" Rika then chimes in as she keeps driving.

"All those in favor of checking if animals can get infected raise your hand~" She adds as she raises her hand.

"Rikaaaaa!" Shizuka pouts as she tries to lean forward to grab Rika's hand, to no avail.

"Well, I was the one that mentioned it..." I add as I raise my own hand.

"The more we know of our enemies, the better we can counter them." Saeko then raises her own hand.

"Uhh, well. I..." Khota glances at Asami, who was staring, rather intently at the guy...

"Asami and Khota think that this is a horrible idea." Asami then speaks up. Khota just kept his mouth shut.

(Ohh, assertive.)

"Me too." Shizuka adds with a pout.

"Me four! Zeke too!" Alice then continues with what I think was an angry pout as she takes Zeke's paw and raises it, the dog just started to lick the girl's hand, ever oblivious.

Saya glanced at me, then at Saeko.

"I'm with Naier, leaving things to luck is a good way to get killed." She then adds.

"Hmm, looks like we have a tie." I respond.

And a few seconds later...

"It's not a tie! We won by one!" Alice speaks up.

"Well, I'm going to hold each one of you responsible if we bring back a zombie rabbit and it starts hopping around in the kettle." I shrug as I let out a huge sigh.

"Khfff!" And Rika starts chuckling.

"Actually. I'm going to give you the 'I don't give fuck-all what you all think' card. Because if I'm going out there to hunt. I'm sure as fucking hell gonna check if a deer can go corpse mode on me and turn me into an antler accessory." I respond.

"Muuu, but we voted!" Shizuka protest.

"And I might even check each and every animal at least once to make absolutely sure." I add as I turn to Shizuka, who narrows her eyes and starts, well, I would not call it slapping, more like flailing her arms towards my direction.

"Ahhh, guys!" Rika then shouts as she stops the car.

"W, what! He was bei..." Shizuka then turns to look towards Rika, but her eyes stop at the windshield.

The reason? An uphill zig sag road was ahead of us, and on the top, we could see part of what seemed to be a concrete fence, and behind it, a...

"Saeko, why you didn't tell me your dad owned a castle." I say as I tilt my head.

"It is, not a castle..." Saeko responds.

"Sure as hell looks like one, sloped roof and all. Hell, the top looks like a keep too..." Rika mumbles.

"The top is just used as an observatory, and the radio room my father mentioned." Saeko answers.

"Still a castle." Rika shrugs. Saeko just lets some air through her nose and glances away.

"That is the main building right?" I ask.

"Yes." Saeko answers flatly.

"And around it are all the other things you mentioned. Dojo, storage, garage and all. Which is then surrounded by that concrete fence?" I ask again.

"Yes." Saeko answers fatly, again.

"And it took us? An hour to get here?" I ask again.

"Give or take, yea." Saya nods.

"Hmm, not too bad, we just have to make fewer, bigger trips to town if need be. Because this place looks good, too good." I nod.

"Alright then. Shizuka. Take the wheel." Rika then turns around and leans between the two front seats. And essentially almost shoving her chest to my face.

Shuzika just nods and starts to move...

Did I mention I was still sitting there?...

"I'll take the PSG and take aim through the hatch." Rika continues as a Pinkette was, glaring at me for sitting at apparently the wrong place...

"I'll keep the magazines full!" Khota then slides to a better position next to me as he looks at Rika, who just nods.

"Asami will help." Asami adds as she crawls next to Khota.

"Alright. Saeko, get ready. Once we get there, if the place is not swarmed with corpses, we are getting off." I respond as I turn toward the purple-haired samurai. Who nods back at me.

"What do you want me to do?" Saya asks.

"You got the Mp5?" I ask.

"Uhh, I. I don't. They took it when they kicked us out..." Saya mumbles as she looks down.

"We still have the M1A1 back here." Khota points behind him.

"We do?" I ask as I tilt my head.

"Well duh sweetheart, the weapon is mine, why would I leave it behind? Though I never found where my shotgun was at..." Rika asks with a chuckle.

"S,sweetheart?!" And Saya flies off the handle.

I just glance at Rika, who gives me a playful wink before climbing out through the hatch...

"Uhh, Saya, take the M1 and go up with Rika. She can show you how to shoot it. Or ask Khota, he knows too." I respond.

"Humf, of course 'you' can't show it to me..." Saya mumbles as she folds her arms.

"Well yea, I never used it." I answer as I shrug.

And just then, the car starts to move again...

"Ok people. Put all your thoughts on hold now. We have a house to clean." I add as I check my Scar.

(This is it huh. We do this and we will have a safe house that is 'ours' and is actually safe to kick our feet up?)

Outer wall

rharper909, JaimonDosFendu, OechsnerC, love it guest, Mau160, OechsnerC, Mapoi126u, king Ks - Thank you.

jarjarhead - sooner or later there will be moar.

kirosyamcha- We get it, this isn't up to your standards, we got that from your first review, why keep the posting and complaining xD? The story ain't gonna change because you don't like it.

HonkiFrog - Compared to how often I used to post, it could be considered, on life support maybe?

- I blame the new alien mothership fallout mod xD, it got me back into the game. And well, resident evil is resident evil, gotta pay some homage to the grandad of zombie video games.

Guest that wonders why people bother.- People like stating their opinions, especially if that opinion seems better.

Rabcor- This is walking simulator.

Jub-erth- Just send me the links and I'll post em at the end of the next chapter.

JamesFreki - Well, truth be told, Saeko probably deserves better than Naier too xD.

Nightwl129 - Wonder who'll be making a fool of themselves

"Uhhh, I'm not so sure about this..." Shizuka, who was in the driver's seat, mumbles. The Humvee steadily going up the zig-zag road towards the TOP WHERE Saeko's 'house' was at.

"Not much we can do about it now, it's this, or sleep in the car." I respond as I keep looking through the windshield.

"Well, if we huddled up reaaaaly close..."

"We'd get a heat stroke." I cut Shizuka off.

(Not that I'd mind, mind you.)

I glance at the empty passenger's seat as I think that. As both Rika and Saya were on the Humvee's roof. And speaking of the Duo. I lean back and climb through the hatch until half of me was out of the car...

"Saya dear, I appreciate the affection, but you don't have to grab on to me 'this' tight." Rika was laying flat on the left side, facing towards the front part of the car, looking through PSG'S her scope. Saya was on the right side, holding on to Rika with one hand, and the M1, which was set up with the bipod, with the other.

"Shut up! The stupid car is shaking too much!" Saya responds with a grumble.

"You two sure get along." I speak up as I lean on the roof in front of me. Causing the girls to turn towards me, with, vastly different expressions. Rika was casually staring at me, and Saya had her signature frown.

"Well as part of a harem, we do have to get along~" Rika smirks as she narrows her eyes.

"If I didn't need you to hold on to something I'd kick you off!" Saya loudly responds.

"Wrawr. Feisty~" Rika chuckles back.

"Did any of you see the top?" I sigh as I glance at the two.

"I did manage to see the front gate as we took the last turn. Front gate was wide open." Rika responds.

"So at least we'll be able to see how bad things insides are when we get up there." I respond as I nod, turning to look towards the top, part of the towering wall visible from here.

"Just hope we can close it afterward. If it's operated via electronics it might be offline." Saya adds with a now calm voice.

"One step at a time." I nod slightly as I crawl back inside the car.

"Are they alight up there? I think I heard Saya shout a couple of times." Saeko then asks.

"Shakes too much for her liking." I respond.

"Uhh, I'll try to drive a bit slower." Shizuka then mumbles.

"Well, the front gates were open from what Rika saw, so we're in no rush. As now we need a plan. Since we got some info." I nod slightly and turn to look at Saeko, then Khota and Asami.

"Other than you and Saeko going in while we provide fire support?" Khota asks.

"Yes, with the doors open we could think up something safer." I nod.

"Safer? Like?" Asami asks back.

"Hmmm, well for example..." I tap my chin as I think.

"What if we used the car to block most of the gate, then I and Saeko go around the wall from the outer side. I can fire off a couple of shots there, that will draw all the corpses towards one side from the inside, but keep us safe because of the wall, while you can take pot shots. Sure we will first have to check if there are corpses around the perimeter as well before doing that, but it could make clearing the outside safer if we got the ammo for it." I shrug.

"We got the ammo for it, trust me." Khota taps the big wooden box next to him.

"I apologize, but I would prefer if I can take my house back from these things with my own hands." Saeko then speaks up.

"You will, when we'll have to clean the insides." I respond as I look at Saeko. Who nods back.

"I will inform Rika and Saya then." She adds as she gets up, climbing up the hatch without saying anything else.

"Miss Busujima did not seem to like this plan very much..." Asami mumbles.

"Well, considering her father's status, maybe having the 'enemy' squat down at their own house could be considered a disrespect that demands blood. But charging head first into trouble is a good way to lose your head." I answer as I look at Asami, who kept staring at me while making multiple small nods, or was her head just swaying?

(Also the fact that Saeko had not let loose for some time now...)

"Naier." And Saeko leans through the hatch, extending a radio towards me.

"Saya wants you to have this with you if we are to go with this plan." She adds as I take the radio with a small nod.

And so, the car climbed up the hill, until...

We reached the top...

A wide-open field, the place felt like a mountain with its top cut off. And in the center of that field, at about a hundred meters or more. A tall, thick-looking wall, and in a straight path from where we were, a giant wide open gate, revealing the insides.

"Damn this place is huuuuuuge!" Khota exclaims as he keeps staring through the windshield, wide-eyed.

"Ok, the gate is way too big for the car to cover it whole, even when put sideways, you could probably fit a bus through it..." I sigh slightly as I narrow my eyes.

"Too many..." I add as I shake my head.

"Way too many corpses. Looks like a damn horde in there. No way we are walking in as is." I continue.

Essentially, just through the open gate, I could see a congregation of corpses, twenty? Thirty? Fifty?

I take a deep breath and climb up through the hatch. To end up meeting Saeko's back.

"... Penetration, we could probably take two or three of them with each bullet, these guns use high caliber bullets." Rika points at the corpses as she makes a finger gun at them.

"I would rather we do not fill my the house with bullet holes though." Saeko responds.

"If we gather them towards the wall, it's the wall that will probably look like a kitchen strainer. But it seems to be pretty sturdy to take that much punishment." Rika shrugs slightly as she turns to Saeko.

"Well, it better be, since we'll be behind that wall." I then speak up, causing the trio to turn towards me.

"Are we set?" I ask, Rika nods back, and Saya also slowly nods.

"Saeko?" I ask right after. Saeko just nods at me. Then gets up.

"Let's go?" She then asks as she turns to me.

"Alright, we will go check the side of the outer wall. Go and check how bad the insides are, use the car if need be since we intend to draw them away by gunfire anyway." I nod back as I also climb out the hatch.

"Be careful." Saya mumbles as she glances away, then turns to look towards the gate through the M1's scope.

"I'm always careful." I respond as I jump down.

"Except when I'm not..." I add in a low tone as I start walking.

Glancing behind me I find Saeko silently following me.

And so, we walked to the edge of the wall until the side became visible.

A long field, with the wall extending down in the distance to our right. To our left, after about, fifty, or sixty meters, a rather steep downhill drop leading to the forest.

(Corpses can't go up slopes right? Or was it down slopes? I remember in the anime they did not like slopes. Barreling down when they stepped on one. But uhhh, I can't remember if they could walk up on one...)

I fold my arms as I walk up to the edge of the hill. And stay there, thinking...

"Naier?" Saeko then speaks up, looking at me, then towards the forest which I was staring at.

"Do corpses go up slopes?" I ask as I turn to her.

"I do not know." Saeko responds flatly as she glances towards the forest again.

"Well the path here seems hard to traverse, hopefully, they're bad at climbing..." I add as I take a few steps back, then turn to look at the

wall.

"I don't see any corpses around. This means that the wall has not been breached, from this side at least." I nod slightly as I walk up to the wall, then bring the radio to my mouth.

"Place is empty here. Ready on our end." I speak up as I check my Scar-H.

" Alright. We drive up to the gate with the car, Rika and I will shoot from there. I will tell you when to shoot to draw them away. " And Saya's voice responds.

And, after a few seconds passed.

" We are by the gate. Shoot, they are attracted to the car. " The radio speaks up again.

I nod, put the radio on my chest pocket and lift my Scar-H, aiming towards one of the tree tops in the distance.

And...

-BANG-

A single shot and the edge of the tree top flies off and disappears into the foliage below.

" Alright, it's working, they are all going towards the wall. " The radio speaks up.

"Just try not to miss too much ah? I prefer the house I'm staying at to be not full of holes." I respond with a chuckle as I press the talk button on my radio. The only response I got was 'stupid'

And so, I let my Scar hang on my side, and lean against the wall.

Only for a single shot to echo shortly after, then another, and another...

"Guess we'll wait now." I sigh as I take a deep breath.

Saeko then leans against the wall next to me, before sliding down and sitting on the grassy floor, folding her legs and hugging them, her sight focused towards the forest...

"Saeko? Everything alright?" I ask I turn towards her.

"Of course. I, just feel a bit useless right now." She smiles at me, then looks down towards the forest again.

"Soon, we will be safe. Right?" she asks after a few seconds.

"Uhh, that's the idea, yea." I respond with a slight nod. Saeko just kept staring at the forest.

"So the need to fight will be reduced..." She mumbled...

"Saeko, what's bothering you?" I ask as I crouch down next to her and take off my helmet, lifting my mask afterward.

"Are you, going to have any use of me after we are safe?..." Saeko whispered as she lowered her head.

"All I can do is fight. And even that seems to become, obsolete..." She continues.

"You know this is definitely 'not' all you can do, it's just something you excel at. And we both know that even if we might end up safer than say, staying in a random ass house, we will still be in more danger compared to before the outbreak. Besides." I sit next to her as I speak.

"You have another, very important skill." I add as I put my hand on her shoulder, causing her to turn and stare at me...

"You cook." I add with a deadpan tone...

Saeko stares at me for a few seconds, before trying to hold herself from chuckling as she glances away.

"Plus, you keep talking about how you might not have enough to offer 'me'. You do realize that you are speaking to the guy that might end up spending a whole day playing video games if he gets the chance right?" I ask as I tilt my head.

"How, do these two connect?" Saeko asks back as she tilts her head.

"If you didn't realize it while the world was not up in flames, gamers were not held in very high regard, by other 'normal' people. I mean, clearly, going to a bar, getting shitfaced, and passing out in a dumpster after getting married to a lamppost is a far more respectable way to spend your time..." I respond as I glance sideways. Saeko this time actually starts chuckling as she covers her mouth.

"What I mean by this is. Don't think that you have to break records to deserve what you currently have. On my end at least. Now, if you are useless to the group..." I lift my arm and tap the wall.

"This is your fucking house sweetheart." I add with a chuckle.

" *Naier, shoot .*" And the radio speaks.

"And on that note." I take off my Scar-H and get up, then turn to the still sitting Saeko.

"Think it's about time you fire the big guns." I add as I extend my arm. Saeko glances at me and takes my hand as she gets up.

"You only used the handgun at the cinema, so." I flip the safety on the Scar-H, and give it to her.

" *Naier? What's taking you so long? Fire already!* " The radio shouts.

"Uhh, right, we gonna do this under pressure..." I walk up behind Saeko as she stops looking at the gun, turning her head to follow me

until I was behind her.

"Put the gun's butt on your shoulder, firmly, this thing kicks way more than the pea shooter you used before." I add as I tap the scar's stock.

Saeko nods and does as I asked.

"Now place your cheek here, and aim anywhere. Use the scope on the gun, the dot is where the bullet will go." I continued as I tap the middle of the stock.

"I know this is rushed, but the rest of the group's gonna get swarmed if we spend too much time, pull the trigger." I add as I point ahead.

Saeko pulls the trigger and...

"EEP!" With a short yelp, she stumbles back, or more like gets pushed against me. Ending with me holding her over her waist.

"This kicks, a lot..." She mumbled as she stabilizes herself.

"Yea and your posture was plainly put, epically bad. To the point that the recoil actually caused you to lose your footing." I chuckle.

"Hmm, actually, this reminds me. Do you not still owe me a favor from the cinema?" Saeko then turns to look at me with a slight smirk.

"... Uhh, I don't, remember?" I respond as I frown slightly and glance away.

"I am pretty sure you do." Saeko then tilts her head as she starts staring at me...

"If it'll fix your mood, then shoot." I fold my arms as I chuckle.

"Hmmm..." Saeko glances at the gun for a few seconds.

"I want you to. Pamper me, when I'm feeling down." She adds as she lifts her head to look at me.

"Huh, wonder who'll believe me if I told em that 'the' Saeko Busujima used her last favor to get pampered." I chuckle as I ruffle her hair.

"I am still a woman Naier, I do wish to curl up and feel safe in a certain 'someone's' arms when I become anxious." Saeko lowers her head and brings it closer to my chest as she speaks.

"Actually, now that you put it that way, there is something I've been meaning to ask you. You keep mentioning how you are a woman before admitting that you want to show weakness to somebody. Does that mean that you believe guys should chalk up everything the world throws at them without budging or leaning on anybody?" I ask as I lift an eyebrow.

"My father did have a rather, strict view on how a man should carry himself." Saeko answers as she lifts her head.

"You know that's a very good way to make a person 'stop' being a person once they have been weighted down with more than they can carry." I respond as I bring my hand to the temple of my head with a finger gun motion, and 'shoot'.

"You among others should know how it feels to bottle up and carry everything yourself, a man ain't built any deferent in a psychological level. " I continue. Saeko just lowered her sight again.

"No man is an island, and I definitely ain't even a damn hill if that's what you expect of me." I chuckle as I fold my arms.

Saeko closes her eyes for a few seconds, before lifting her head to look at me.

"This, is something my father would definitely not agree with." She responds as she glances away.

"And normally, it would be something I would not agree with either. But now, it would actually make me very happy, to know that I could be your support when you need it..." She adds as she presses herself, and gun, against me. Keeping her head lowered.

"Well, these things 'do' work better on a give and take situation." I responds as I ran my finger over her ear. Pulling a few stray strands behind her ear.

"I have already told you, that I am willing to give you everything you ask of me. As you have already given me more than I thought I could ever have." She whispers as she nuzzles her face against my neck.

"Everybody has something that keeps them going. You are that something for me." She continues as she closes her eyes, and...

-BANG-

A loud gunshot, and Saeko jumped back like a cat that just got jump-scared, her eyes wide open in surprise. Gunpowder smoke trailing from the Scar's barrel.

" Oi Idiot! Why did you shoot! You ruined my shot! " And an angry voice speaks up from my radio.

"... Well, that, was a rude wake-up call..." I scratch the back of my neck as I keep looking at the rifle in Saeko's arms.

"Uhh, maybe I am not ready for the big guns yet. " Saeko takes her hand off the handle, holding the gun by the stock and barrel, before extending it to me.

"Well, we both got carried away a bit too much with a loaded gun between us. Let's just be glad we got lucky and nobody lost an arm, or leg." I take the gun and flip the safety.

(Good thing my past life drill instructor was not here to see that. I don't even want to think what he'd think up as punishment for

misfiring a loaded gun...)

" *Hey! Answer me! Did something happen?!* " And the radio speaks up again.

"Uhh, my bad, everything's fine." I respond to the radio. Hearing a sigh/groan through it.

"Sorry for causing trouble." Saeko then speaks up as she folds her arms, glancing sideways.

"And, thank you..." She continues as she smiles slightly.

"Ehh, gotta be useful for something." I chuckle back as I shrug, sitting down on the grass with the wall to my back.

"So, question..." I tap my forehead as I speak up.

"Say we clean all these corpses..." I fold my arms as I turn to look at Saeko, who proceeded to sit next to me.

"How are we going to drag them out of the premise?" I ask as I tilt my head.

"Hmm, that is a good question, for the ones inside the building, I do not know. For the ones outside, maybe we can use the snow plower we have in the building on the Humvee?" Saeko asks back.

"You got a snow plower?" I ask again.

"We are in the middle of a forest at a relatively high altitude Naier. This place gets snow up to the knee in the winter." Saeko chuckles.

"Hmm, yea that could work then. And if we dig a hole and start a bonfire in there we could burn the corpses and bury them." I nod slightly.

"Though having to dig a mass grave does not sound very fun..." I add as I sigh.

"Too grim?" Saeko asks back.

"Too deep." I respond with a chuckle.

"I mean, Khota can't dig, Alice can't either because she is too small to efficiently do it, Saya does not exactly have a knack for physically taxing things, neither is Shizuka, plus with how clumsy the latter one is, I would not be surprised if she accidentally demolished part of the outer wall by digging under it or something. That leaves me, you and Rika and Asami." I continue as I look towards the field to our left, the direction the Humvee and the rest of the group were at.

"Hmm, thinking of physically taxing things. I actually can not wait to finally relax with an actual bath. The airport's baths felt weird to relax in. They didn't feel, safe." Saeko sighs slightly as she closes her eyes.

"Right, your father did mention that this place has an underground lake plummed into it. Which means we should have clean water if we can get electricity for the pumps to work." I respond.

"Yes, though we could also check the pumps that draw water from the river too." Saeko answers as she opens her eyes.

"Wait, what river pumps? And, I thought it would be illegal to pump water from rivers with how tightly Japan regulates water." I fold my arms as I tilt my head.

"It was. But my father is a stubborn man. He considered the river to be 'part' of his land, thus why he built the infrastructure regardless. He later found out about the underground lake that was fully in his patch of land and managed to legally pump from it, so the river pumps got abandoned. But, I don't think he ever got them dismantled, so they should still function if we just find how to operate them, and where they are. The reason he did not mention it, I do not know, he might have intended to tell you about it via the radio after we take back the location." Saeko responds as she shrugs slightly.

" *Naier, shoot* ." And the radio speaks up.

"Want to try again?" I ask as I tap the Scar. Saeko looks at the gun for a bit...

"I think I will leave this one to you." She responds as she smiles slightly. I just nod, flip the safety, take aim, and fire a single shot.

"So, where were we?" I ask as I flip the safety again.

"The river pump?" Saeko responds.

"Right, do you think they have plans of it in the house? To find the location?" I ask. Saeko shakes her head.

"They were built quite some time ago, I do not think so. I do know they are over that direction though." She points ahead and to the right. In other words, the opposite direction in which we came from.

"I just would rather not use the lake's water for bathing and cleaning for example, since it's filtered and ready to drink." Saeko continues as she lowers her hand.

"Hmm, if we go that way we should find a river sooner or later then, we can follow it till we find some infrastructure after that." I nod slightly.

"Though I'm more worried about electricity, a generator itself is fine, but not efficient enough long term, too much fuel." I sigh.

"Actually, I was meaning to ask, are solar panels these blue panes that you latch on the roof of a house?" Saeko then asks as she turns to me.

"Roof, floor, but yea, blue panes is about right." I nod.

"I think this house has some..." Saeko then adds plainly...

"... Whut..." I frown as my mouth is left slightly agape.

"I was not sure if they were what you were talking about, but. You can probably see the building's top if you walk towards the edge of the field. The house always had blue roof tiles. But my father did install some new ones not long ago. I was, not exactly at my best at that time, so I did not bother to find what he did..." Saeko then continues.

"Not at your best? Sick?" I ask as I turn to look at her.

"You called it self-loathing. I think, that term would fit the best..." Saeko answers as she lowers her head slightly.

"... They say everything happens for a reason. And from the looks of it, this outbreak did have at least one thing you're glad about huh?" I say as I get up.

"Like you would not believe." Saeko chuckles as she also gets up.

"I would dare say that I like my life now more than before the outbreak." She continues as she walks up next to me...

And so, we walk to the edge of the field and turn around.

Sure enough, the top part of the building was now visible, and...

"Why, am I learning just now, that this house has solar panels installed..." I mumble as I keep looking at the roof.

"Umm, surprise?" Saeko lifts her arms to shoulder height as she makes an apologetic frown.

"Suprise indeed. If these do work, then ohh boy." I lift an eyebrow as I fold my arms.

" *Naier, shoot.* " And the radio butts in.

Without saying anything I turn around, aim toward the forest, and fire a single shot again.

"How come you are not shooting in the air? They tend to do that a lot in the movies." Saeko then asks as she looks towards the forest.

"Because they don't record the part where those bullets come falling back down with a vengeance." I chuckle as I respond.

"I see, makes sense now that you tell me about it." Saeko nods slightly.

"Now, I do hope you do have a usb stick with movies somewhere in that giant ass house of yours." I say as I push the Scar-H to my back.

"A Usb stick with movies? You want to watch movies once we have free time?" Saeko asks as she tilts her head.

"Saeko, huddling up to a couch and watching horror movies all night long is dating one-o-one." I respond as I laugh through my nose with a one-sided smirk.

"Oh, that, does indeed sound nice." Saeko blinks at me a few times, before nodding with a smile.

"Though, something tells me somebody else will demand your attention first once we clear the house." She continues as she turns to look towards the wall.

"Uhh yea, guilty as charged, I guess..." I lift both arms in a surrendering motion.

"Do not worry though, I will push through my loneliness and wait for you while you are cuddling with Saya." Saeko then adds as she folds her arms, turning to stare at me with her eyes slightly narrowed and a smirk on her lips.

"You know I have nothing to say back on that matter, other than, I warned you about it?" I make an apologetic 'ehh' motion as I bring

both my hands to shoulder height. Saeko just chuckles as she brings her knuckles to her lips.

"Who would think that the person that would save me from myself, would turn out to be such a playboy. Luckily for you, I do not really care, as long as you keep your promise to me." She adds as she folds her arms. She then walks up to me, and leans next to my ear.

"I would not even mind if you wanted me to, hold down Saya for you~" She whispers...

(Oh holy shit she just shot this into overdrive...)

I lean back and stare at Saeko's visibly flushed face.

"Sometimes I forget that you're an, uhh, hardcore physical interactions enjoyer..." I clear my throat as I keep staring at Saeko, who just chuckles at me as she leans back.

"I am doing my very best not to let my issues be a burden to you." She responds with a now calm smile.

"I just sometimes, slip up a bit, when I am alone with you." She adds as she puts her arms behind her back, tilting her upper body slightly.

(Slip up my ass, you know very well where you're stepping on...)

"For now, keep that energy for the corpses in the house. We are the ones that will have to deal with them." I respond as I fold my arms. Saeko just nods back...

(Well, better than being depressed I guess...)

" *Uhh, Naier? I think we are done here...* " And the radio speaks up.

"And speaking of the devil, I think this means it's our turn." I motion with my head as I start walking.

(Time to clean house...)

And so, after I grabbed my helmet, which I had left next to the wall, and re-wearing my gear. We headed back to the car, which we found parked a little further from the gate, with 'dead' corpses scattered all around the gate...

"That's a lot of re-deads..." I mumble as I close in to the car, looking at the corpses on the grassy floor.

"Hummf, obviously, what did you expect?" Saya lifts the M1 over her shoulder as she tries to strike a pose? I think?

"Good job you two." I nod slightly as I fold my arms.

"You're, uhh, welcome." Saya stops posing and glances away...

(Wait, did she just blush?...)

"Hmm? Miss Bususjima seems to be in a much better mood now." Asami blurts out as she pops out through the back door.

"Ohh, you're right~ She was all sulky before, now she looks, filled up~" Rika adds with a grin.

"F, filled up?!" And Saya turns to stare at Saeko.

(Please don't...)

I turn to glance at Saeko.

"He took care of my needs." Saeko responds flatly.

"Needs?!" Saya shouts again.

"I did nothing weird." I respond as I lift my hands.

"I also agreed to hold down Saya next time the three of us are alone." She adds, an everlight smirk on her face...

" **HOLD DOWN?!** " And Saya's voice reached new decibels.

"Oh my, sounds like fun~" Rika just started chuckling, while Asami, and Khota, turned beet red. Shizuka was covering Alice's ears while staring at me with a weird, blushing, surprised, yet grinning expression.

(Kill me...)

-Boom! Suprise update!-

Yea, I got overloaded working on commissions for my 3d projects, so I decided to spend a bit more time writing to cool off xD. Now, back to 3d modeling and posting an update every 4 months xD.

Mark

DredgenVayn- It's more if it's going to be believable, rather than him telling them the truth because they trust him. There is a difference between 'I'm a sadist'. And, 'I'm a deep space calamari from a different plane of existence that got hit by truck-kun' xD

WolffiaPH- True, but considering as this was the very first person the Mc saw dying in front of him, and he ain't exactly Agent 47. Things could easily get muddled.

Guest that loves it, OechsnerC, Malguss123, Mau160, second guest that is loving it. - Thank you.

Krieger Techpreist- And then they fu... (User disconnected for foul language). Jokes aside, this story ain't gonna have lemons, none of my free, do for myself stories will ever have lemons. Lemon-flavored processed juice is the best you're getting xD

Nightwl129- But, they are not technically behind that fence yet xD. Not that there are any lemon trees planted in that house. Just saying.

Guest that has been lurking- Takashi's moment was a test run on how to write that stuff if I'm going to write it. While story-wise it essentially means that he did it while the mc did not. I honestly, don't care xD.

Zeta guest- It's a mod from the same guys that made project Mojave, essentially adding a small spaceship and a small dome in, Mars I think? Both acting as settlements, (With alien settlers) along with several vanity items from mothership zeta from f3. Still living for the moment we'll get an actual giant spaceship with an observatory that has part of the earth as view though xD. Want ma personal high tech house in space damit.

Guest that is loving it, Mau160, Malguss123, other guest that is loving it, OechsnerC, and another guest that is loving it, HectorFenyx- Thank you.

"Nothing seems to be moving." Saya mumbled as she looked around through her scope, laying flat on the left side of the car's roof. Said car parked right under the main gate.

"The main building's first floor is a broken mess, whole parts of the wall seem to be missing, as I can see straight through the house and towards the back side of the estate." I add as I point ahead, my feet touching the hood while I was sitting on the center of the roof...

(The first floor seems to have several walls made from traditional Japanese paper/lattice walls. I'd go on a limb and say that these are bad for keeping corpses out, seeing how it seems like a damn train passed through the first floor...)

"The back wall, half of the left side, and the front side of the first floor were traditionally built." Saeko, who was next to me on the right side continued.

"So all that noise 'should' have moved most corpses out of the first floor then." I nod slightly as I fold my arms.

"Hypothetically." Saeko nods back.

"The second and third floor should be intact though, as they were made with sturdier materials" Saeko continues.

"Make the bottom floor out of paper, the upper floor out of titanium. How come the house is still standing?" I ask as I chuckle.

"If the supports and load-bearing walls are sturdy, then some open holes won't matter." Khota, who was with his upper body out of the hatch, replies flatly. Causing me to turn and stare at the guy.

"W, what?" He then asks as he glances at me.

"I didn't know you worked in construction." I respond as I arch an eyebrow.

"Ahh, well. Uhh, there was this survival game I played that had realistic structural support physics and if you messed up your whole house could get toppled if you put too much weight at the wrong spot..." Khota mumbles.

"Huh, so the geek's knowledge ended up being useful." Saya scoffs.

"... Saya, you know I'm a 'geek' too in that aspect right?" I sigh slightly as I turn to the pinkette.

"Uhh, well you're..."

"And were you not the one playing video games on that laptop Saya?" I cut her off with a small smirk.

"You play video games?!" Khota then exclaims, leaning his face towards Saya with sparks in his eyes.

"L, let's focus on the task at hand you idiots!" Saya quickly blurts out as she turns to look back through her scope.

"Busted~" I chuckle as I turn to look ahead as well.

"Shut up..." Saya mumbled.

"So, should we start?" Saeko then asks as she leans toward me.

Other than the main building in the center, there was a roofed garage to the left, big enough for about three Humvees, behind it I could make out a big building that looked like a warehouse.

In the center was the main building as mentioned, and to the right, another smaller warehouse/garage, that also had the generator

attached at the outer side that faced the main building, based on what Saeko told me.

Behind that in the distance the Dojo was partly visible. Behind the main building, a Japanese-style garden, at least from what I could see through the holes in the main house.

And finally, in front was an open unused space. Unpaved, meaning that if somebody had the know-how, they could hypothetically plant something.

"We'll start with the two small warehouses next to the house, then move to the main building." I say as I get up, checking my Scar-H and sword.

"Very well. Let us begin then~" Saeko then adds as she also gets up a smirk on her lips.

"Keep away from the fallen corpses, we don't know if any of them are crawlers." I point towards our left as I jump down the car's hood, taking the long way around the mass of 'dead' corpses that had fallen over each other in the courtyard.

"Checking these will be a risk. Need to figure out a safe way to do it..." I mumble as I keep walking.

"We could just make a lot of noise." Saeko, who had followed up next to me whispers.

"Yea. But one problem at the time. Let's see the insides before we turn our back to the house." I respond. Saeko nods slightly.

And so, upon reaching the leftmost building, the garage, I knock on the closed shutter gate. And...

-Thud!-

"... We got at least one inside." I look around before walking to the edge of the front wall as I speak, looking at the small 'corridor'

between the garage's wall and the main building's wall.

(Huh, this house seems even taller from up close.)

"I see a window here, half open. Saeko, keep an eye on your back, I'm going to check the window, I'll tell you if you are to make some noise." I turn towards Saeko, who had drawn her blade. She nods at me and turns to look behind her.

And so, I walk up to the window. And upon peeking inside...

(One by the shutter, one on the opposite corner hitting its head against the, wall? And two on the floor in the middle. No car inside, metal rack shelves with tools, and a table on the far right side...)

I pull my radio, which I took from a reluctant Saya after giving mine to Saeko, and press the speak button.

"Kick the shutters." I whisper before pocketing the radio again. And a second later...

-SLAM-

A loud noise echoed from the shutter. Yet, nothing changed, other than the corpse in front of the shutter getting aggravated and slamming back harder.

The two corpses on the floor stayed there, the headbanger kept banging its head...

(Well, here goes nothing.)

With a last glance behind me, I open the window and quickly take a look inside to make sure there were no corpses next to the window.

And then I enter the garage through the window.

I pull my knife and silently walk up to the two downed corpses while staying crouched...

I quickly grab one corpse by the collar and yank it before stabbing it on the side of the head. And as quickly, do the same for the second downed corpse.

I lift my head to see the other two standing corpses still doing their own thing...

I get up and walk up to the headbanging corpse. Using my free hand I push it up against the wall so it would stop moving around, and then plant the blade of my knife to its side of its skull as it turned its disfigured head towards me. Backing off and letting the corpse fall next to me.

Or at least that was the idea, as apparently all that headbanging might have made the thing numb to the fact that it should be, dead dead. As it tried, and failed, to turn around and charge at me, the word being tried, as it ended up stumbling and charging right into a shelf filled with tools that were next to it, a good two meters away from me.

-CRASH-

And it toppled the whole thing with it under it, causing the corpse by the shutters to turn around and come towards me.

" *What happened?* " And my radio speaks up.

"I'm fine!" I shout as I sheath the knife and draw my actual sword. And with a quick side step as the corpse walked up to me, I bring the blade down to its extended arms, severing both with a clean cut, then, with a swift kick to the back of the knee, the corpse fell to one knee, and one sideways upward slash later the corpse lost its head, as it's body slumped lifelessly to the floor.

"Clear." I whisper as I look around, sheathing my blade and walking up to the shutters.

After a quick look around, I find the manual roller on the left side and head to it, grabbing the thin flat rope and giving it a strong pull, causing the shutter to lift slightly off the ground...

(If this was a video game this'd be a button-mashing moment.)

I chuckle under my breath as I start pulling the rope until the shutter was about three fourth's open. While in the meantime Saeko crouched under the shatters and entered the now clear building.

"What happened?" She quickly asks as she looks at me.

"Apparently corpses don't use the whole of their brains." I motion with my head towards the now unmoving corpse under the shelves.

"Thing kept going after bashing its skull against the wall and getting stabbed to the head" I add.

"Hum, I knew that some people working under my father were a bit, thick-skulled. Didn't expect it to be literal though." Saeko huffs as she makes a one-sided smirk.

"And here I was thinking that you might get bothered by the fact that we might be killing people you knew..." I chuckle back.

"I did not know them. I did not interact with the people my father had give and takes. They had nothing to offer me that I was interested in." Saeko shrugs as she turns to look back out.

"Alright, let's go back to the other storage next to the house, then the main house." I back off from the rope and head up next to the purple-haired Samurai, who just nods back at me.

And so, we walk back out of the garage, and towards the front entrance of the main building.

The front, as I mentioned, was wrecked, as after a few wooden steps and a porch, one-third of the wall that should have been there was essentially missing, as if ripped off from the seams. With only part

the sides of the wall remaining, as they seemed to be made from a sturdy material. From where I was, I could see that the main room was a Japanese-style living room. Tatami floor, short wide table in the center and all. I also noticed that the still-standing walls had some bullet holes in them...

"Somebody went a bit trigger happy it seems, or there are corpses that are packing heat around here somewhere..." I arch an eyebrow as I keep looking around, then start to walk past the main building. Saeko just tilted her head questionably.

(At least, I hope they are corpses. Living people with guns is trouble.)

And so, we moved to the other side of the building, the smaller, warehouse-like structure becoming visible, its shutter wide open, completely empty inside.

Also, on the wall that faced the main house, a relatively big rectangular metal box, a single panel embedded in it.

"This's the generator?" I ask with a whisper as I motion with my head towards the box. Saeko nods back.

"So it's supposed to connect to the main building," I add as I turn to look towards the main building's wall. This one fully intact, as it was made by actual, well, walls. Yet, there was one weird thing about it.

"Huh? Why are the windows this up high?" I ask as I point at the main building's windows, which were in fact about two to two and a half meters up high.

"The house is a bit elevated, I think it had something to do with foundation problems? From the inside the windows are actually where they are supposed to be." Saeko then responds as she folds her arms.

(No wonder the house seemed tall.)

"I'd say that would make it harder for intruders to enter, but uhh. The first floor is missing half its walls right now so..." I chuckle as I look towards the far back side, behind the main building, the dojo visible, along with a small part of the garden.

"Well, this side looks cl..." Just as I was about to finish, a single corpse pops up from behind the warehouse, still several meters away from us.

"Lear..." I sigh as I start to draw my blade, only for Saeko to dash past me and teach the corpse how to divide itself, before glancing towards the blind side behind the warehouse, and quickly raising her blade again before disappearing behind the wall...

A 'slash' and 'thud' later, she pops up, blood staining her shirt and side of her face.

"Now it is clear." She gently smiles as blood trickled down her cheek...

I just stared at the sight before shaking my head to snap out.

"Uhh, right." I mumble as I turn around to head towards the main building's entrance. Saeko just followed behind me with a small giggle.

Upon heading to the central entrance of the main building and climbing up to the front porch...

(Damn, this place is a wreck. Gonna need to expert levels of carpentry to fix them holes. Also bleach, because bloodstains...)

I turn to Saeko and motion to be silent from now on by putting my finger over my mouth, she just nodded back in silence.

Now as for the insides go, other than a single corpse that was under the short table, slowly shuffling about, I could not see other corpses, yet the place was like a blood tornado just passed from here, the

wall in front of me, ripped off the seams, the wall on the other side, also torn to pieces, along with the back outer wall of the main building. With the missing walls, a staircase on the far right side of the building was partly visible, along with a wide view of the back garden, the large warehouse, and about half of the dojo.

The wall to my left was partly intact, the part next to me was still there, but the further side was once again missing, essentially fusing the hallway that should have been between this room and the outer wall into one. Now the wall to my right was actually fully intact, even the door was still there. It was just that, I was pretty sure that that wall was not supposed to be crimson...

I motion to Saeko towards the corpse on the floor under the table as I silently start to move towards the other side of the room. Saeko nods and draws her blade as I walk past the table, only to hear a single 'thud' from behind me seconds later.

Once I was near the stairs, I glanced toward the upper floor.

(Pitch black. Fun...)

Then look to my left. And I found why the left wall on the inner side was still partly standing. The still-standing partition ended up being part of another room, having a single closed door that looked towards the garden.

Throwing one last glance at the staircase, I head to the closed door and get a better look at it.

(Solid wood, no idea what's behind it.)

With that though, I push it slightly...

No reaction...

I frown and grab the handle slowly turning it and pulling the door.

This time the door opened with no resistance.

And, I didn't even need to fully open it, to see that the insides were a bathroom.

I take a deep breath, and fully open the door as I backstep...

A single corpse was inside a filled, blood-red bathtub on the far side of the room, a line of cupboards on the left side, much like you'd see in a modular kitchen, the central cupboard having a sink attached to it, the wall over the cupboard being a giant, sadly cracked mirror. And finally, another corpse on the ground, missing half an arm.

I pull my knife and enter the bathroom, walking over the female-looking armless corpse before kneeling over it, using my leg to push against it as I make sure it was 'really' dead.

Afterward, I glance at the corpse in the tub. Unlike the dead body I found in the bathtub inside the building with the tools that shot Rika, this one did not look pale. It was a male corpse, butt naked with bite marks all over the place.

"You should have watched where you stick it I guess..." I whisper as I hit the hilt of the knife on the cupboard next to me a couple of times, and the corpse reacts. Groaning as it tries to get up, only to keep losing its grip as its hands kept slipping on the lip of the bathtub.

As I kept staring at the poor SOB that was trying to get out of the bath.

-Knock, knock-

Knocking from behind me.

Throwing a quick glance behind me, I find Saeko, making an 'ok' sign at me, before raising an eyebrow and looking past me at the naked corpse. She then looks back at me, eyebrow still arched. I just shrugged and turned to look back at the corpse again. I placed my

knife on top of the cupboard to my left, drew my blade, and stabbed the sluggish corpse to the face, essentially doing it a favor.

Then I sheathed both my blade and knife and turned to Saeko, who turned to exit the room. Me following behind her.

(There's only one door left to check, the one in the bloody wall.)

I nod slightly and head towards the wall to the right side of the living room that had now an unmoving corpse under the table.

Upon reaching the door, I glance at Saeko as I put my hand on the handle. She nods and ready's her blade. I nod back and try to pull the door.

No reaction.

I then push, and the door clicks as if it was now open, yet it just budged, very slightly.

I frown and give it a stronger push. Nothing.

"Barred from the other side." I whisper.

"We can use the windows. The ones you asked me about a few minutes before." Saeko responds, I just nod and turn to leave the building.

And like that, we found ourselves by the generator again.

"Can you give me a boost? Or you want me to?" Saeko then asks as she sheaths her blade.

I shake my head and walk under the window, kneeling slightly and intertwining my fingers.

Now, the thing was. Saeko wears a rather, short skirt...

And nobody told me that after she would step on my hand, she would bright her other leg on my shoulder to balance herself, essentially spreading my legs right on my damn face...

(... Black...)

On the other hand, knowing Saeko. Maybe she was very well aware of what she was doing...

Especially considering that...

(... I can feel a glare all the way from the Humvee right now...)

The car was in plain view.

"There is a table blocking the door." Saeko casually remarks as she essentially keeps flashing her underwear at my face.

"I also see three corpses inside. No idea if there are more on the floor" She adds as she finally climbs up completely.

"Hmm, ahh. There, this window is open." Just as she says that she jumps back down, landing in front of me, then taps my shoulder to move out the way.

"But I do not think I can enter through there with the corpses waiting right next to the window." She folds her arms as she narrows her eyes, looking at the window. She then glances at the second window that was further down the wall.

"Can we try that window too?" She asks casually as she points that the further window.

"Sure." I answer with a slight shrug as I head toward the second window.

(I could make a joke of her not having to stick her panties to my face, but I'm eighty-nine percent sure she'd turn that joke on my head)

With that though, I motion towards Saeko with my head as I take position under the window.

Saeko nods, and repeats the exact damn movements...

(... Zombies, Naier, keep focus on the things trying to stuff their face with your face...)

Saeko uses the hilt of her blade to hit the window a couple of times, causing the corpses inside to turn towards the source of the new noise.

"Alright, this should do it." Saeko nods slightly as she jumps back down.

And as we walk back to the first window.

"You want me to open the door first, or clear the corpses?" Saeko asks as she turns to me.

"Open the door, it's a kitchen, how much free space you got in there to move freely?" I ask back.

"It is spacious enough for me to deal with a couple of corpses of that is what you are asking me." Saeko answers as she tilts her head, while in the time I take position under the window.

"See if you can free up the door, if they get too close, then drop em." I answer. Saeko just nods back and proceeds to climb up, this time entering through the window.

(Alright, let's go to the front.)

I nod and quickly run back towards the front of the house, before entering and stopping in front of the kitchen door.

A few seconds later, I hear the sound of something heavy being dragged across the floor, and the door opens, Saeko peeking her head from behind the door.

(Is it just me, or is she even more bloody now?...)

That question got quickly answered, as I entered the room to find not a single corpse was still standing...

"... You just could not resist huh..." I chuckle as I fold my arms, looking at the 'dead' corpses on the floor.

"They, got too close?" Saeko responds, while still 'hiding' behind the door, only her head peeking out.

"Close? These guys are on the other side of the room." I arch an eyebrow as I point to the far end of the kitchen.

"They were being uncivilized." Saeko responds a bit as she closes the door.

"Uhh, speaking of the other side of the room..." I take a deep breath as I look around the room.

For a kitchen, it was big, maybe too big.

It was wide enough to need four to five people standing next to each width-wise. And it essentially looked like a long corridor, since it run most of the length of the main building.

To the right, where the windows were, a line of kitchen cupboards, two installed with sinks, other having kitchen utensils on them like blenders or cutting boards.

The left side had some steel trips with hooks, with even more kitchen tools hanging on.

The whole place was also paved with a marble-like floor. Yet, it was not slippery, considering all the blood splattered about. Which was honestly a good thing. One for the fact that unlike the tatami floors in the main room they will be easy to clean. And two, well let's just say I'd rather not slip into a corpse's open mouth.

And lastly, on the other side of the room. A big, sturdy metallic door...

"Why do you have a vault door here?" I ask as I tilt my head.

"Vault door?" Saeko also tilts her head questionably. I just point straight ahead.

"Ohh. That's just the fridge's door." Saeko monchalantly responds.

"... That's, not a fridge Saeko, that's a vault door leading to another room." I respond flatly.

"Yes, to the fridge." Saeko awnsers just as flatly.

"... You fridge is room sized?" I turn to look at Saeko with a preplexed expresion.

"Making constant trips to the city to restock was just as much of a waste even before the outbreak Naier." Saeko chuckles back, missing the point that, well. Fridge room?

"If that was stocked up before electricity got cut, it must smell like crap now..." I sigh as I drop my hand.

"No idea if it had anything inside, let's check it?" Saeko asks as she starts walking towards the door, casually walking over the corpses.

(... Did she just grind her heel on that corpse's face?...)

I blinked a couple of time before following Saeko.

Upon reaching the door. Saeko puts her hand on the handle.

"Wait. Come over to my side, so you'll be behind the door when you open it." I raise my hand as I pull my knife. Saeko nods and lets go of the handle, before grabbing it again after we changed sides.

With a small nod from me, she then pulls the handle, unlocking the metallic door with a loud thud, and starts to open it.

Yet, before she could even fully open it,

-THUD-

Something from the other side slams into the door, violently opening the rest of it, essentially slamming the door into Saeko. While at the same time the perpetrator himself was with arms stretched out, blindly charging straight at me.

I pull one leg back and ready my knife, only to find out that the leg I pulled back to stabilize myself, ended up getting blocked by a body before I could actually get a stance to counter the changing corpse, leaving me in a posture that was plainly put, bad.

"Shi..." Was the only thing I managed to mutter as the corpse crashed into me, sending me falling backward as I reflexively brought my right arm up in a defensive motion.

"Naier?!" And the moment I hit the ground, I heard Saeko shout. Opening my eyes, I found that the corpse was now gnawing at the armguard on my right arm.

Yet, something was weird, the pressure felt from the corpse's bite felt, strong, too strong. And then it hit me.

This armguard had already been cracked when Rika and I got stranded and a corpse had managed to get a bite out of it in the office building. In other words.

It was not doing its job properly.

(FUCK!)

I didn't manage to do anything else before the corpse found its head crushed against a cupboard and a boot heel. Only to then get

grabbed by the back of its collar and get yeeted back inside the fridge, causing a chunk of the armguard to fly off along with it.

I quickly twist my arm and look at the armguard. A bite-sized chunk missing on the outer side of the middle section.

"Well, shit..." I mutter as I keep looking at the armguard.

"No, No no no!" Saeko kneels next to me, grabs my arm and undoes the front belt of the armguard, then violently pulls my sleeve up.

Now, the bad news, while the corpse didn't manage to actually bite the underside of my arm, was that there was an outline of a bite mark on the upper side of my arm. The good news was that there was no blood, and the mark did not seem to have broken the skin...

"Got to disinfect that, yesterday." I take a deep breath and use my leg to close the fridge door for good measure. Yet as I try to get up, Saeko did not move, she just kept an iron grip on my arm, staring at the mark.

Or at least, it seemed like she was staring. Her expression looked more like a thousand-yard stare, rather than an actual stare. She also did not seem to hear me, at all.

"Saeko." I grab her shoulder and shake her, causing her to finally turn at me staring at me like a fish for a few seconds, before turning to stare at one of the corpses next to us.

She then lets go of my arm and grabs one of the 'dead' corpses by the hair. Lifts its head, and shoves her wrist in its mouth.

"OI What The fuck?!" I quickly grab her arm and yank it back out, thankfully without any signs of cuts.

"LET ME GO!" Saeko screams back as she tries to break free from my hands.

"I DON'T WANT TO BE ALL ALONE AGAIN!" She continues to scream as she closes her eyes, shaking her head as she keeps flailing her arms, trying to break free.

"Saeko pull it together! There's no blood! It's just a mark not a bite!" I shout back as I bring my arm close to her face. Saeko finally opens her eyes and starts to stare at my arm again.

"I, I..." Was all she mumbled as she kept staring, and then, tears started running down her cheeks.

"Come on. Keep it together." I whisper as I pass let go of her hands and pass my other arm around her neck, pushing her on me as I start to get up, making her to get up alongside me.

"Disinfectant, does the bathroom have any rubbing alcohol and anything to cover it or something?" I add. Saeko took a few deep breaths, and nodded a couple of times

"Rubbing alcohol, yes, rubbing alcohol." She turns and runs out of the room, leaving her blade on the ground.

I glance towards the exit before quickly grabbing her blade and following behind her.

"Naier! What happened! We heard screaming!" Only to find Saya in the main room, staring at me, with Rika behind her.

"Sorry commando, I tried to stop her, she's awfully fast when she wants to be." Rika takes a few deep breaths as she stops next to Saya.

"For fuck's sake people! We're in hostile territory, return to your damn posts!" I shout as I point back out, with the wrong hand. While at the same time Saeko ran out of the bathroom with a napkin and a bottle of what I think was alcohol, or disinfectant, or something.

"Is, is that a bite?" And Saya asks as her eyes go wide, her voice seemingly leaving her lungs. While the meantime Saeko runs up to me and starts whipping my arm, seemingly not ever realizing, or caring that there were two other people here.

"No, I bumped against some bloody kitchen stuff. Everything's fine. Ugh, Rika, please bring Saya back to the damn car. This place ain't safe yet." I groan as I look behind me.

"Yea, sorry about that." Rika nods and starts to push Saya. Throwing a glance at my arm.

"You better not be lying to me..." Where Saya's last, whispering words as Rika made her turn around, though she did keep turning her head to look back towards me and Saeko as Rika led her away.

"Uhh, Saeko, think that should be enough." I then turn towards Saeko, who was still scrubbing my arm, her expression stuck in a blank wide-eyed stare.

"Saeko." I move my free hand and shake her shoulder.

"Huh? Naier?" Saeko snaps out of her unfocused stare and turns to look at me. Yet, she didn't seem any more focused.

"Saeko snap out of it. I am fine." I add as I wave my hand at her. Saeko just turned to look at my arm again.

"Saeko, focus." I bring my hands to her cheeks and make her face me again, then shake her head lightly. Glancing around the house to make sure that the shouting didn't bring any unwanted attention...

Honestly, it was not up until now that I realized how much of a mental crutch I was for her. Yes, she had told me so, but she was also the one that said that 'girls like acting weak'. So I had figured she was at least, partly acting. Yet, seeing her staring at me with that blank expression, as if her brain shut down. This is not something you can 'act'.

"Yes, I am fine." I nod as I keep looking at her.

(But, you are not. It's too risky to try and clear the upper floors while she's like this. And leaving her to do it myself is probably not a good idea. Since I got a feeling that she won't, behave.)

"Let's go back to the car, we'll clear the rest of the building after some time passed. Just so you can see that I am fine. Ok?" I 'ask' and push Saeko lightly as I start to walk, Saeko just nods and follows the force of my push...

(I need to find something to replace the damn armguard. One time I didn't maintain something and it bites me in the ass, or arm...)

Take two

Krieger Techpreist- I'd call it overconfidence, that's the main reason I always end up dead in zomboid .-. . Getting cocky and taking needles risks, or not being as thorough as I should be.

Eldrift60/ DrFantastic -Thanks. Now, I could use a proofreader since my old one got tired/found better things to do. But uhhh, you have your p.m.'s disabled xD

rharper909- As I always say, actions have repercussions.

DrackNath- Yea, a lot of fics tend to forget that Saeko ain't exactly, perfect.

Guest that loves it / Malguss123 / OechsnerC/Mau160 - thank you

TenkaMeansHeaven- Well, that giant cage was no hallucination. Now was the big good girl real? Who knows.

RadChaos897- Thanks. Wish I had more time to write so I would not need to cut corners on this story xD, plus I got like three more franchises I want to write about right now. But, ehh, I ain't a millionaire to spend my time how I want so what can I do xD.

ThatDevilSlayer - I really wonder if something like this was meant to happen in cannon too.

Nightwl129- Ohhh, self burn. Those are rare

DevilOlantern- Why do people wear sunglasses in the middle of the night, watches when they have smartphones, tight-toe shoes that wreck your feet, extremely saturated/bright suits. Not everything needs to have a good valid reason to be, it just is. I like masks, so I made him like masks, simple as that. If it makes him weird/cringy/stupid/Not how I want him to be. I honestly don't care .-. Also, don't hump masks, they have sharp points.

"Are you s..."

"Yes." I cut Shizuka off.

"It doesn't h..."

"No." I cut Shizuka off again.

"Why do you keep c..."

"Because this is the hundredth time you wanted to check my arm in the last five minutes." I cut off Shizuka yet again. And she finally lets go of my arm.

I then re-tie the bandage Khota gave me from the stuff inside the Humvee and lower my sleeve.

"Kitchen wares my butt..." Saya mumbled with her arms folded, leaning her back against the door next to her seat. Staring at me from the back of the car, as I was now sitting on the front passenger's seat.

"Yes, Kitchen wares your butt." I reply flatly.

"If I had just, followed your orders and did not kill these corpses near the fridge, as you told me to..." Saeko, who was in the middle of the back seats mumbled as well, her sight locked to her legs.

You see, now we had another problem. That being that Saeko started blaming herself that I tripped on a corpse that was 'dead' near the fridge, since she was the one that killed them...

"And if I had remembered to change my broken armguard. And if Rika had not dragged me into that job that cracked my armguard." I respond.

"Hey now..." Rika frowns slightly as she pops from behind my seat.

"The point is, it's nobody's fault. Or it's everybody's fault. Besides, had you not stomped that corpse as fast as you did it might have managed to actually bite me. Plus, I should have been more aware of my surroundings. We got too relaxed, we should be glad 'this' is the worse that happened for not taking it as seriously as we should have." I continue as I keep looking at Saeko.

"Are you sure you are ok?" Saeko then asks as she lifts her head.

"Asami has seen a person after they got bitten. They become sick, very fast. Naier does not look sick." Asami responds as she glances between me and Saeko with a worried expression.

"I also checked the bite mark, there aren't any cuts, the armguard and clothing under made the bite more like a bruize from a blunt object if anything." Shizuka adds.

"Uhh. Did we get any corpses coming from the forest?" I ask as I turn to Rika. Mostly to at least try and change the damn subject.

"Nope, none popped up from behind us. No idea what's happening behind the estate or the actual zig zag road though." Rika responds. I nod back.

"Right. So, as much as I want to skip this. We 'still' need to clear like half of the estate..." I sigh as I turn to look back towards our 'base'.

While it looked clear from here. Aside from corpses that needed to get burned or buried. We still had the warehouse, dojo, and two upper floors to check.

"And we're burning daylight here. We got, what, three more hours before the sun bails on us?" I add as I lean towards the windshield to look at the sky, then pull my watch from my vest's chest pocket.

"Ummm, maybe if we sleep in the car. And return to the airport tomorrow..." Shizuka mumbled.

"No. Absolutely not, I am NOT going back there." Saya declared as she leaned towards the center of the car, narrowing her eyes at Shizuka.

"Sorry..." Shizuka just lowered her head apologetically.

"Ekhem, time for round two it is then. Before you guys start clawing at each other." I clear my throat and exit the car before the group could really react.

Though, I walked less than ten meters before Saeko climbed through the car's roof hatch, jumped down, and ran up to me.

Yet the moment she reached me, she didn't speak. She just gripped her blade's sheath with both hands, not making eye contact with me...

"You're not going to ask me 'not' to go now are you?" I ask as I turn to her and tilt my head. Saeko just glanced at me before lowering her head again.

"You know that is not an option. Who will go?" I ask back.

"I will. It is my house, my respo..."

"Except it's not your house. It's your father's. And your father asked me to clear it. And to keep you safe. Plus, didn't you mention that you'd give me 'everything you are'. Pretty sure that makes the house my responsibility then." I arch an eyebrow as I fold my arms, leaning slightly towards Saeko.

"... Please, do not do this to me..." Saeko whispered as she kept looking away.

"Look, Saeko. Normally, I'd let you go. Even by yourself. But not now. Not this time. Not when you look even more shaken than Saya." I lean back and shake my head. Saeko just kept looking away.

"I'll be back before you know it. Have some faith sweetheart." I pat Saeko's head before turning to walk towards the main building again...

Throwing a glance behind me a few seconds later to find Saeko still standing there like a statue.

(... She's just going to freeze there?...)

I turn to look towards the car, looking at Rika, who was now in the front passenger seat. Once I saw her looking at me, I bring my fingers to my eyes, then point at her, then point at Saeko. Rika quickly nods and exits the car, running up next to Saeko and leaning over her shoulder to whisper something as she passed her arm over her other shoulder. And then they both started walking towards the car, or more like, Rika led Saeko to the car.

(... She's, really out of it huh...)

I take a deep breath and turn to walk to the main building.

(Better make sure I don't realize her fears then. Didn't make it this far to croak on the last fucking straight.)

And I enter the building.

(Ok, so. The main room, is clear. Bathroom, clear. The hallway that's fused with the main room, clear. Kitchen, I need to check the damn fridge. Then, second floor.)

I nod, and turn to walk towards the kitchen.

"*Naier, if you want us to make a distraction tell us.*" And my radio speaks up.

"Roger. For now though, try not to speak to my radio unless I speak first Saya." I respond.

"*R, right. Sorry.*" Saya mumbles back before closing the radio.

And with that, I enter the kitchen. The place looking the same as before.

I take a deep breath and walk up to the fridge, glancing at the corpses I tripped over.

(To think I almost got done in by your ugly asses...)

I grab the corpse nearest to the fridge by the leg, and drag it back.

"Guess pulling them by the leg will be the safest way to drag em out of the estate after we're done." I whisper to myself as I nod. And then head to the fridge door.

(Now, let's finish this damn thing.)

I grab the fridge handle, and pull the door. Which once again, with a loud -THUD- opened up. Yet this time, nothing jumped out.

While still hiding behind the door, I peek inside. A few steps inside the fridge, the piece of my armguard, laying there, almost as if it was provoking me. Deeper in, the corpse responsible for this shitshow, laying on its back, arms and legs sprawled, unmoving.

Otherwise, the place was almost empty. There were a few carton boxes in one corner, but that was about it.

I nod and enter the fridge. After making sure that the door had a handle on the inside that is. Lest I end up like some poor old butler named Winston.

I first went to check the corpse. That was indeed, very dead. Head smashed in and all. Then, I went to the carton boxes in the deeper corner.

Opening the top one, which was about half my height, I find it to be filled with canned food.

"Leftovers?" I ask as I tilt my head.

"Well canned food does not really need refrigeration, so it should be good to eat." I nod as I close the carton box and turn to exit the fridge. Then proceed to exit the kitchen.

Once in the main room, I turn to walk towards the staircase, only to find a corpse walking up the stairs of the porch that led to the garden, behind the main building.

(The fuck you popped out from?)

I draw my blade, and after a quick glance around me, I run up to the corpse. And as it was still not completely up the stairs, I manage to easily land a stomp kick right into the center of its chest, sending tumbling back down on the stone-paved floor.

I walk down the stairs and switch my sword to reverse grip as the corpse landed flat on its back. And before it could get back up, stab it right between the eyes.

Pulling my blade back, I look around me.

The garden looked clear, as it lacked any type of thick vegetation to hide any corpses. Thought it would need some good mopping, like the rest of the place.

(The porch is walled off, no way it came from under it. So where the fuck where you hiding at?)

As I keep looking around, I spot a single, rather large blood splatter on a cracked stone floor tile a few meters to my left.

I scratch my head and look up. Yet could not really see anything, since other than the porch ceiling, the second floor had this slopped roof running around it, the type you'd see in a Japanese castle.

(Maybe from the second floor?)

"First floor clear. Moving to the second floor." I whisper to my radio as I walk back inside the building.

"Naier, Rika is saying to look at the rooms on the side that overlook the car. The noise of all the gunfire should have drawn them away from the doors." The radio responds.

"Good thinking. Radio silence." I nod as I answer, then pat my vest down.

(Where did I... Oh.)

And pull the elastic headband flashlight I used in the cinema from my bottom vestpocket.

(Here we go.)

I nod and strap the flashlight on the helmet, then open the flashlight. Since the staircase led into darkness, too much darkness.

And so, I climb up the stairs silently, readying my sword.

Upon reaching the second floor, I found myself on the end corner of a dark hallway.

Said hallway turning to the right into an equally dark hallway.

Looking behind me, the hallway continued the distance of the whole building, before ending with a turn to the left.

Now, I could see a total of three doors. One on the center in the wall on my left which was adjacent to the stairs, one on the wall straight ahead of me, near the corner. And equally, one door on the far end behind me, on the wall that was facing me.

(Hmm, big chance this hallway runs around the second floor as a square. With the wall to my right being part of a square room in the center. So, we have at least three rooms on this side, so six rooms total? Seven countings the central one)

Before deciding to check the rooms, I walk down the end of the hallway that was near me, then turn to my right, and start walking

down the next hallway.

(I see some blood splatters on the floor, no corpses though. No idea how we can clean blood stains off a carpet though...)

In this hallway, much like with the door in the corner behind me, there was another door on the other end of the hallway, in the wall to my left. Once again, near the corner. Plus, there was also a door on the wall to the right, proving that there was indeed a square room in the center of the second floor. Also, the next hallway seemed to have some illumination, as I could see light coming off from the corner of this hallway

Upon reaching the corner of that hallway, I turn right to find a new staircase, this one going up. A single, unmoving body on the bottom of the staircase in an unnatural pose, seemingly as if it fell from the top of the stairs. The stairs were also the source of the light.

(Hmm, this time there are two doors in the wall adjacent to the stairs, so, nine rooms total?)

I walk up to the body by the staircase and kick it lightly. No reaction. Needless to say after the last fuck up, I didn't take any chances, I made sure that that body would not be getting up with a quick stab to the head.

I then gave one last glance at the staircase before walking past it, heading towards the last hallway in the set.

And, much like the second hallway I checked, this one was an exact copy of it, it even had the door that led to the square room, which meant the room in the center had two doors that led to it.

Thing is, that door was partly open, and partly missing. With its top part seemingly broken, or ripped off.

(What the fucked ripped a door apart...)

With that though, I ready my sword and walk up to the open door. Once next to it, I peek inside the central room...

A single corpse standing in the center with its back turned to me, a fire axe in one hand. The other hand was close to its face, holding what seemed to be a severed hand. There were also two more bodies on the ground around it, and I mean that literally, around it as they were chopped apart and tossed around the room...

(Wait, this guy busted it here, chopped these two apart, and then turned?)

I frown slightly as I silently walk up behind the fire axe-wielding corpse, making sure not to trip over any body parts.

And the moment I closed in, lean forward and stab the thing right on the back of its head. Causing it to drop the fire axe and fall to its knees, sliding off my blade's edge as it fell forward.

(The other bodies are mutilated beyond recognition. So unless they can pull an Addams family on me and start having sentient moving hands they ain't going anywhere...)

Looking around this room, I found it to be a storage of some sort, having two metal racks with various sanitary items. Mostly house cleaning ones, though it did also have some soap packs as well. Along with several mops and buckets next to the metal racks.

(Well, this is good. Hell knows we'll need to do a major clean-up here.)

I nod and walk to the other side of the room, to the door that led to the second hallway I checked. Then, I open the door and exit into the hallway.

(Ok, uhh. I'm sort of disoriented. The staircase I came from, which is nearer to the dojo and warehouse is to my left now. So, the car should be.

I point to the right.

(That a way. On the hallway with the staircase that leads to the third floor.)

I nod again and walk up to the said hallway.

(Hmm, all four hallways are clear. So before checking the rooms. Let's see the third floor, just in case I need to bail, and going up is the only path.)

With a small nod, I walk up the staircase.

To end up in a rather big, almost empty room.

Other than the fact that it was on the top floor which was much smaller in total compared to the second or first floor due to the pyramid-like structure of the building. This room was essentially more than half of the third floor, having windows on all sides except to the left. There was also a telescope right ahead of me by the window, but that's about it.

Oh, and five corpses. Non dead ones. Thankfully, none seemed to have spotted me.

Two were in the center, kneeling down over a mangled body, another two by the only door on the floor in the wall to the left. And one by the telescope 'looking' out of the window.

(Ok Naier. Go for the lone one. Then to the ones kneeling down, that leaves two corpses standing. Maybe use a gun on em then.)

I take a deep breath and silently creep to the corpse by the telescope.

(All or nothing now.)

Readying my blade, I make a sideways slash, severing the thing's head in a clean slash. Making it fall on the floor, and on the

telescope, toppling the thing along with it, causing a crash loud enough to warrant a save-state load...

(Really now?)

"Not a fucking ninja apparently." I groan as I quickly turn to see all four remaining corpses turning towards me.

The two by the door had already started walking, while the two on the floor started to get up.

"Yea well, fuck that!" I let my blade drop and ready my handgun.

First shot, and the first corpse in the center fell, the second shot, and its friend next to it joined.

I then turn to aim at the two walking corpses. But do not pull the trigger.

(Wait, the radio. It's not in this room, must be behind that door.)

"I need to change position, can't shoot while the corpses have the wall on their back, lest I roll a zero and shoot the radio with this pea shooter." I groan as I run towards the other side of the room, jumping over the now three bodies in the center of the room, if you count the mangled one the two were munching even a body anymore.

Reaching the other end, I turn around and aim again.

"Ok, we're going to lose at least one window now..." I hold my breath as I take aim, and.

One shot, and one of the two corpses fell, the window right next to the wall behind it getting a new set of cracks.

I then take a few steps to the left to align the fifth and final corpse with the already cracked window, before firing again.

And as the last corpse fell, the window shattered.

"Hope insulation in the rooms bellow is good, or I just gave us some very cold nights, since this will create a stream of wind with how the bottom floor is one giant ass hole." I pull my radio as I stare at the broken window.

"Nobody's screaming why I'm shooting? I'm impressed." I speak up.

"You told us to keep radio silent. And, I expected to you report after shooting. Otherwise, we'd just have to come and save your sorry butt." Saya responds from the radio

"Good. I've checked part of the second floor and half of the third. I'll make sure the third floor is clear and then clear the second. Ps, the second floor is probably staying quarters, found like, nine doors that led to rooms. None checked." I answer.

"I see. God I hope the beds are not soaked in blood." Saya sighs.

"True that. Going silent." I respond as I turn to look at the door on the wall to my left.

Upon heading up to it, I try to open it. To no avail.

"Uhh, locked?..." I groan as I back off.

"How the fuckity Ima get in?" I tilt my head as a gust of wind that entered through the broken window caused me to sway slightly.

I turn to look at the window and narrow my eyes.

"Wait." Then walk up to it. And look outside.

Now, needless to say, the view from up here was pretty amazing. Being this high up I had a very good view of the forest and its hills. I could also not see the city from here as it was hidden behind some rather tall hills, or was it that we were in a spot where the ground had receded? Either case, this was good. As if we can't see them, they can't see us.

More importantly, right after the window, was the slopped roof with the solar panels.

"I could enter the other room via the window. If the wind doesn't decide that my planet needs me and flings me into outer space." I let out a small sigh as I walk to an intact window and open it, then carefully climb out.

" *Hey! What are you doing you idiot?!* " And my radio shouts. The reason being that upon looking to my right, I found that I had a pretty clear view of the car...

"Photosynthesis." I respond flatly as I crouch down and start walking next to the solar panels, using the wall as support.

Now thankfully, while the wind 'was' being a bitch, it was not strong enough to turn me into a kite, so after cleaning some glass shards from a solar panel that was next to the broken window, I walk towards the window right next to it and peek inside.

"There. Le Radio." I nod as I spot a desk with a ham radio set up on it, adjacent to the door. Along with several pieces of machinery, probably receivers, amplifiers, and the such.

Next to the desk, a single body slumped to the ground on a sleeping bag, hugging a teddy bear. With several open cans of food next to it.

There were also several carton boxes on the far end of the room. And an open window a few meters after the desk with the ham radio.

"No need to break even more windows" I nod and keep walking until I reached the corner of the wall, then turn to the left and carefully walk up to the open window. And after a quick check inside, I climb in.

I then holster my handgun, and draw my blade.

Or I would have, had I not forgotten it on the floor in the other room.

"Ts..." I click my tongue and pull my knife, then walk up to the body.

But in the end, I didn't really have to check. As other than the teddy bear it was hugging, it also had a Nambu m60 revolver clenched into its hand, and a hole into the back of its head.

"Took the easy way out huh..." I whisper as I carefully push its trigger finger off the trigger, before pulling the whole revolver from its hand. Then, I press the release button to release the cylinder. A single bullet was visible inside, which I soon found to be used.

"Not that I blame you. Being the last living person left in the middle of fucking nowhere with nothing but a teddy bear and one bullet." I add as I leave the revolver on the desk with the ham radio.

I then get up and look at the radio itself...

"Uhh, no idea how you turn this thing on. Khota probably knows since I'm pretty sure I've seen these in military installations. Right now though, it looks as dead as the previous house's inhabitants. Hopefully, it's just because the building has no electricity right now, we'll have a problem on our hands if it's actually fried." I back off from the table and turn to look at the carton boxes on the far end.

Walking up to them, I find that they were also full of canned food.

"Damn, guy was stocked. Guess the idea of being stuck here alone for the rest of his days broke him down. Good for us I guess. More food left, less alive people to deal with..." I sigh as I turn to look at the dead body.

"And now I'm about eighty percent sure that my pre-outbreak self wouldn't be very proud of me for saying something like that." I add as I head to the door, the key still in the keyhole.

After unlocking it and opening the door to the room with the dead corpses and the toppled telescope, and sword.

"Third floor clear. Second floor left." I speak up as I walk up to my sword and puck it up.

" *You're an idiot.* " The radio flatly responds.

"Scuse me?" I ask back as I sheath the blade.

"*Why did you walk out the friggin window?!*" Saya shouts back.

"Door was locked?" I answer just as flatly.

" *You could have fallen!* " Saya responds with an angry tone.

"I could have also crept into your room while you slept. But neither did happen in the end." I shrug as I look towards the open window, then towards the stairs.

" *N, now is not the time for jokes you retard!* " Saya yelped back, though her voice sounded more flustered than mad now.

" *H,hey! What are you, I wansdfff...* " And Silence.

" *Oi commando.* " And a new voice speaks up, Rika's. Judging from how only she calls me commando all of the time.

" *If you start clearing the second floor I got an idea.* " She adds.

" *Me and Saya can go towards the dojo and warehouse when you'll start clearing that side. While my sexy old car is a bit too fat to pass through the building gaps, we can get some ammo crates and start clearing these places out, that should also give you some breathing room to clear the dead things on that side.* " She continues.

"Good idea. Take Saeko with you too." I answer with a small nod.

" *Saeko?* " Rika asks back.

"Yes, but give her a gun to use. Help her with the basics aight?" I respond.

" *Hmm, three is better than two.* " Rika mumbles.

" *Saeko, think you can do it ?*" She then asks, her voice now sounding distant, as if she had lowered the radio.

" *Alightly, me and your two girlfriends will go on the other side once you're set .*" Rika responds and closes the radio.

"I'm sure Saya just flipped from that last line. Though, they 'are' my girlfriends now, are they not? I think..." I tilt my head as I start to head toward the second floor...

(Anyway. Focus. Just one floor left...)

[So, got an Important (For me) announcement to make.

And that is that. Well, holy crabs! It actually happened. I actually got my very first donor/Supporter! Now that was something I never expected to see.

**So bring out the confetti peeps, tis a very important moment~
And to that one person, you have my personal thanks!]**

Closing shop

REYZERO: The story will essentially come to a 'soft' end, leaving loose ends as the story is too complex to keep track of when chapters end up being months apart. Adding even more stuff to it will just make it a jumbled mess.

rharper909, guest that loves it, OechsnerC, HectorFenyx : thank you

Krieger Techpreist: Tell that to a dead 6-month character xD

Sleepygirl: Thank you, chapters are essentially one per month/2 months, if you don't want to have to check all the time.

Nightwl129 : That's b8 m8.

theangrychef: He left his Jo-Jo manly-man shoes home.

(3,2,1)

"Now." I whisper as I open the door, handgun raised. While in the meantime, a single gunshot echoed from the outside.

I look around the room as I stood by the door frame. A bed on the left corner of the room, ahead of me, a desk. And in the wall after the bed, wardrobe doors.

(Clear. Or?)

I walk up to the wardrobe door, and after a quick check under the bed, I bring my hand close to the wardrobe.

"Any itchy, tasty's in here?" I whisper as I knock on the door, then step sideways as I open it.

"Clear." I nod as I step back, looking at the almost empty wardrobe. Only a single kimono hanging inside.

"That's six bedrooms and one bathroom." I holster my gun as I walk back into the hallway, now being relatively bright as each and every door was left open.

Essentially, both hallways that had the doors towards the central storage room had bedrooms of the same size and layout, the layout being a double bed and a desk, along with a medium-sized wardrobe. The one door by the staircase that led downstairs had a larger-than-average room. And the last two doors by the staircase that led to the third floor. One was a bathroom, the other the bedroom I just checked.

Now out of all of them, three were empty. The big room and the room next to the bathroom along with the bathroom itself. And out of the other four, one had a single corpse stuck under the bed, the other three had no corpses, but dead people. One of which had bled all over the bed. So yea, Saya jinxed it.

Speaking of Saya. She, along with Rika and Saeko when to check the Dojo and warehouse as Rika said.

Now the warehouse, turned out to be locked. The dojo, well. It had a mini horde inside. Thankfully three people going ham in it was enough to clear it. Though the dojo probably looks like total shit now.

"The house is clear." I let out a small sigh as press the talk button on my radio.

" *Looks clear on this side too .*" The radio responds.

"Alright, let's meet up on the first floor." I nod as I throw a last glance towards the window. The sky a deep orange.

"We won't be able to lock this place down today..." I whisper as I head to the staircase, then to the first floor.

Upon reaching the first floor I walk up to the table in the main room, the one that had the corpse under it. Then grab the corpse by the leg, and start to drag it towards the front porch of the house, walking down to the stone pathway that led towards the front gate, the humvee now parked under the gate's doorframe.

"We need to see if we can close the gate too." I whisper as I let go of the corpse. Then return to the house and sit on the table.

Not long after, the trio of Rika, Saya and Saeko appeared from the back porch of the house, the one that led to the garden.

"Ey there commando!" Rika raises her arms to wave at me as they all walked up to me.

"Any problems on your side?" I ask as I take off my helmet and lift my mask.

"Ehh, there are probably some stragglers left inside the dojo, don't think they'll be going anywhere. We closed the doors for good measure." Rika shrugs as she looks behind her.

"You two Ok?" I ask as I get up, glancing at Saya and Saeko.

"I'm fine..." Saya responds as she keeps staring at me. Saeko nodded slightly.

"Alright. Let's head back to the car. We need to figure out our next step." I motion with my head as I start walking towards the car, leaving my helmet on the table.

-A few minutes later-

"So the door has a panel huh." I nod as I look towards a small console next to the open gate.

"Yea, the gate doors are on rails. Sliding-type, obviously the panel does not work now though. But we can probably close them manually, as long as they are not locked in place. Though that

means that anybody with half a brain cell can slide them open too." Khota nods back.

"Hmm well let's see if we can close them first. I'd like to actually clean the place from corpses first, but we need to find the snow plower, as dragging all the corpses out of the courtyard will take way too long..." I turn to look at the dead corpse mass on the left side of the courtyard. I then exit the car and walk up to the gate's sliding door. Though calling it a door might have been an understatement, it looked more like a giant brick slab, part of it seemingly digging into the ground, as there was a gap into the ground that let the slab move back or forth.

I walk to the back edge of it and give it a push. Much to my surprise, the giant door slab started to slide, relatively easy too.

(Huh? Guess the on-rails part means that this thing has wheels to slide onto too? The thing looks and feels too heavy to be able to move this easy)

In the meantime, the Humvee entered the premise as Rika run to the other sliding door, closing the gate completely.

"And we're closed shop~" Rika chimes as she wipes her hands.

"With like ten thousand corpse bodies still on our side." I add as I stop next to her.

"Wouldn't it be freaky if they all got up again the moment the sun set?" She asks with a chuckle as she turns to me.

"... I'm holding you responsible if they start going all re-dead on us." I let out a breath from my nose as I drop my shoulders.

"Umm, where should I park!" Shizuka then asks as she opens the driver's door, peeking at us from inside.

"That garage over there!" I point towards the garage on the left side of the main building.

"Take note that there are three corpses in there, dead ones!" I add. Shizuka nods and closes the door, then starts driving again.

"Think we might be able to take a bath before sleeping?" Rika asks as she turns to me.

"The bathroom on the second floor was clear of corpses and blood, but also had no running water. Best we can do is use some of our drinking water from the car..." I respond as I fold my arms.

"We should have gathered some water from the river..." Rika sighs.

"Yep. But we still have to clean up anyway. If we make the beds filthy we'll have to clean them too. Which will be much harder and resource-consuming" I start walking towards the garage, the Humvee now parked right outside as Saeko dragged a corpse out of the garage by the arms.

"Pull 'em by the legs! Safer if they decide to stop being dead!" I shout as I raise my hand. Saeko turns to me, nods, and lets go of the corpse, then runs up to the corpse's legs, grabs it, and starts dragging it again, followed by Asami and Khota, who were dragging another one.

"Oh Naier! The plower is in here!" Khota then shouts as he and Asami drop the corpse outside. Then points toward the garage.

"Hmm..." I look at the dead horde to my left.

"Well, let's see if we can at least hook it up on the car." I nod.

"I'll check it up." Rika answers as she starts to jog towards the car. Me following behind her.

(If we could at least get some of these corpses out for now it'd be better than nothing. Or you know, knowing we can plow them out)

"Where is the plower?" Rika asks as we reach the car.

"There." Khota points at an orange piece of curved plastic that was up against a wall in the side of the garage, next to a tire pump and a table with some tools.

"Aight, I'll check if we can use it to get rid of the uglies in here." Rika nods as she walks up to the plower.

"Ah Rika let me help! You are still injured!" Shizuka shouts as she runs up to Rika.

"What about the ones inside the building?" Saya asks as she also exits the car.

"We'll have to drag em out." I answer flatly as I turn towards the pinkette.

"How many?" Saya asks again.

"Uhh, two in the first floor's bath, like five in the kitchen, including the fridge..."

"There's a corpse in the fridge?" Saya tilts her head with a frown.

(Or right, they don't know.)

"Yea, this house has an actual room for a fridge." I answer as I nod.

"Oh, makes sense then. What else." Saya casually shrugs.

(... Too common for your rich tastes huh...)

Holding back that thought I point at the second floor.

"Second floor has one, three, four dead corpses, and like another four 'non-corpse' bodies. Oh and giblets." I continue.

"Giblets?" Asami asks as she stops next to me with Khota.

"Some dude went ham with an axe on, two people I think? Before turning into a brain muncher himself" I shrug.

"Oh..." Asami just hugs herself as she looks away.

(Queasy?)

"I did find cleaning tools in the same room though so we could probably clean all the..." I then turn to see Alice staring at me.

"Piniatta parts." I continue.

"And finally, third floor has seven, five corpses I dealt with, one body of a probable dead survivor inside the radio room, one outside." I add as I turn to look towards the third floor.

"We could probably clean the house before the sun sets." I add as I then look at the sky.

"Then there is no time to waste." Saya answers as she starts to walk toward the house.

"Anybody else wants to come?" I ask as I also start to walk, turning to look at the group. Saeko nods and walks up towards me.

And so, me, along with Saeko and Saya walk into the building.

"Alright, where we start from?" Saya asks as we stop in the main room, glancing at my helmet.

"Bathroom has two." I point to the left.

"Kitchen has five or six." Then point to the right.

"Also. Before we start. I'd like to apologize to both of you.." I then continue, Saya arching an eyebrow questionably, slightly tilting her head.

"Apologise?" Saeko asks back.

"For leaving both of you to dry." I reply as I grab my helmet and wear it.

"You do not have to apologize to me Naier. As long as you are fine I..." Saeko responds as she glances away.

"Now's not the time for this. We're fine." Saya turns to look towards the bathroom, folding her arms as she lowers her head slightly.

"Something tells me this is 'the' time for this. Say it." I respond as I fold my arms.

"What are you talking about." Saya turns to look at me with a perplexed expression.

"I know your body language and the way you speak enough to know that you are 'not' fine." I answer. Saya keeps staring at me, then glances at Saeko, then back at me. Before letting out a small sigh

"... How could I be fine..." She mumbles as she looks away.

"I nearly got raped Naier. Do you expect me to just shake it off? I keep seeing that bastard's face each time I close my eyes." She responds as she turns to stare at me, her brows turning into an angry frown.

"I'm not going to complain that you're ignoring me. I know what we're trying to do here is more important for our survival..." She adds as her face calms down, lowering her head slightly.

(You just complained...)

"I just..." She take a deep breath.

"... No, never mind." She shakes her head and turns to face the bathroom.

"We should clean the house. Let's start with the bathroom." She adds as she starts to walk.

"So it would have been better if I let us go down with a sinking ship, as long as we went down embraced?" I silently 'ask' as I fold my arms, tilting my head slightly.

I just sigh and start walking, heading towards the bathroom door that Saya was standing over.

"Should we drain the water?" Saya asks as I stop next to her.

"After we drag em out, yea. Don't think there is a point in using that water to clean as it's already crimson red. Plus it might even be infectious. We don't know if this, virus, or whatever it is, can survive in stagnant water." I nod.

"Let's get the corpses out first." Saeko then walks up to the first, female corpse on the ground, grabs it by its feet and starts to drag it out of the bathroom, before throwing it over the broken part of the outer wall right outside of the bathroom, next to the garage that the Humvee was now parked at.

Without saying anything else, I walk up to the male corpse in the bathtub and drag it out of the bathtub...

(Huh. Sir-long-dong is here...)

"W, what the?! Why is he?! Why are perverts still perverts even after they die!?" Saya shouts as she turns to look away.

"Don't ask me." I shrug.

"Just get that freak out of here already!" Saya turns to walk towards the bathtub, covering her face to look away from the 'happy guy'

"Is something wro... oh..." And Saeko walks in as I drag the corpse out and throw it over the broken wall as well...

"Ughh, my arm feels all icky now..." Saya mumbles as she also walks out of the bathroom. Trying to wipe her wet arm as she shuddered with a disgusted look...

And with that, we headed to the kitchen.

"Huh, is this the fridge 'room'?" Saya asks as she points at the open metal door at the end of the hallway-like room.

"Yea." I nod as I walk to grab the first corpse.

"... Huh. Figured it'd be bigger with how amazed you sounded." Saya responds as she also walks up to grab a corpse. I just chuckled in response.

After making a total of three runs, we managed to drag all the corpses out, and it was on to the second floor.

We first went to the central room with the axe corpse.

"Hmm, we could use the axe to chop trees if need be." I say as I pick the two-handed axe. While Saya walked to the shelves with cleaning supplies.

"There's bleach here." Saya folds her arms before turning to look at the mess on the ground.

"We're going to need it." She adds as she turns to walk towards the pack of brooms set against the wall next to the shelves.

"How are we going to clean the body parts?" She asks as she picks the broom to feel the bristles.

"What do you mean?" Saeko asks as she casually picks a severed arm from the ground. Causing Saya to glance at Saeko, taking a deep breath and sighing from her nose.

While the girls spoke I started to drag the axe-wielding corpse, going back down the stairs before walking out the back porch and dropping the corpse.

(Now we need to do this for all the corpses in the second floor)

As I start to walk back towards the second floor.

"Ah, commando! Come here a sec!" I hear Rika shout, finding her looking at me through the broken wall next to the bathroom.

I walk up to the broken wall and fold my arms.

"I'm gonna need your manliness to keep the plower steady, Khota is unable to hold it because he's an arm short, and us weak girls can't do it~" Rika chuckles as she motions with her head.

I nod and jump down through the broken wall.

"Hmm where are the two corpses we dropped here?" I ask as I look around.

"Oh, you mean the guy with the boner and the other one?" We dragged em to the mass in the front part of the building. Why, needed em for anything?" Rika casually asks as she arks an eyebrow.

"Not really, just making sure they didn't get up and started strolling around." I shrug as we reach the front of the garage.

The humvee was still parked out of the garage, with the hood facing the gate, the orange plower bearily hanging on the pull bar of the car.

"Alright, grab the thing and..."

-SPLAT-

And a single, severed leg landed unceremoniously on the car's hood, causing Alice, who was by the passenger's seat to let out a short yelp.

"Oi! Who's tossing legs on my Humvee!" Rika shouts.

"Arg! Sorry! I did not realize the garage was under here!" A female voice shouts back, sounding a lot like Saya's.

"Just go a little more your left ah, Alice just had the scare of her life!" Rika responds as she starts laughing.

"... They'll throw everything out of the window?" I ask as I lift my head to look at the sloped roof that obstructed the second floor.

"If it works. Anyway! As I said, hold this thing up for me pretty please." Rika continues as she walks in front of the plower, lying on a mat that went under the car's pull bar.

"Don't push yourself Rika, you're still injured..." Shizuka mumbled as she kept looking over her friend.

-20 minutes or so later-

"Hmmm, this should do it, I can do the rest myself." Rika nods as she wipes her forehead as she stood next to me, the plower now firmly attached to the car's front.

I nod and turn to return to Saya and Saeko...

And by the time I got back up. Saeko and Saya were already waiting for me...

"The second floor should be clear." Saeko speaks up as I walk up to them.

"We checked all the rooms and cleared them." Saya adds.

"Third floor then?" I ask as I fold my arms, and the two girls nod back.

Upon reaching the third floor, Saeko turns to look towards the smashed window.

"We shouldn't throw these ones from this far up, they'll end up breaking the pavement if they fall on it, and the wind up here is not exactly friendly." I speak up as I grab a corpse.

"Yet you still walked out there like a complete moron." Saya groans as she also grabbed a corpse..

"Had to unlock the door to the radio someway." I shrug.

-30 minutes later-

The whole group was now by the garage.

"Give me that water bottle please." Shizuka, who was holding a cleaning bucket pointed at one of the bottles inside the Humvee.

"We really need to get river water for this." Saya sighs as she looks at the bottled drinking water.

"We'll go get tomorrow, right now, we'll just clean the rooms we'll stay in. Too late for expeditions today." Rika nods.

"Oh, by the way, the snow plower is ready to go. Should we drag some corpses out before the sun has snuffed out completely?" Rika continues as she turns to me.

"Yea, more to see if the thing actually works as we want it to." I nod.

"I'll go open the gate, get in the car." I add as I start to walk towards the gate.

"I'll come too." Saya continues as she walks up behind me.

And so, the two of us head to the gate...

"Wait a sec." I raise my hand and walk up to the door, give it a few slaps, then take off my headgear and put my ear on the door...

(Nothing...)

"Should be clear." I nod as wear my headgear on my shoulder, grabbing one of the sliding doors. Saya nods and grabs the other.

"Alright, pull." And with that, we open the doors. Then both me and Saya head to the center of the gate's gateframe. The outsides proving to be as 'alive' corpse empty as the insides.

While still standing by the gate and looking outside, I pat Saya on the back.

"What?" She asks with a flat tone as she turns to look at me with her arms folded. A serious, if not, uninterested expression on her face.

"Still mad huh..." I respond. Saya blinks at me, before letting out a small sigh, turning to look towards the fading sun.

"I'm, not mad Naier. I just..." She lowers her head...

"I, need you by my side, ok? But I'm not stupid, I know that I can't demand that you drop everything for me. Not when you are trying to make sure we don't wake up dead tomorrow..." She adds as she lifts her head.

"But, I still need you. And it pisses me off that I can't stop myself from being like this. It's like my own self does not want to listen to what I'm telling it..." She whispers as she lowers her head again.

"Look, once this shit is done and we can finally relax. I'll give you all the time you need." I respond as I stroke her shoulder.

"You'd better do. Or then I'll really get mad." Saya turns to glance at me with a frown, a slight blush visible on her face.

-BEEEEEP-

"EEEEP!" And Saya jumped in place with a yelp as she quickly turned to stare behind us, her eyes wide open, her hands over her chest.

Only to find a smirking Rika behind the wheel of the Humvee, a pile of corpses getting 'plowed' towards us.

"We should head back." I sigh as I shake my head.

"Y, yea." Saya nods before sticking her tongue out at Rika with an annoyed frown.

"Oh and umm. Naier..." She mumbles as she starts walking next to me.

"I, umm. I, really like you..." She keeps mumbling as she keeps her head lowered. I respond by ruffling her hair. Causing her to raise her blushing face with an annoyed expression.

"Don't pat my head you idiot. Say it back." She whines as she narrows her eyes at me.

"I like you?" I respond as I tilt my head. Saya keeps frowning before letting out a 'humf', turning to look down at her feet again with her arms folded.

"Idiot..." She mumbles as she keeps walking this time with a small smile on her lips...

-30 minutes later-

The sun had given up on trying to stay up in the sky for some time now. And the whole group was on the second floor, by the stairs that led to the first floor. In front of the door of the big room that overlooked the storage and dojo.

"We need two people on guard by the staircase, I'd also say one person on guard inside the rooms people will sleep. But we essentially scoured the rooms to the point of insanity, and corpses are not exactly small." I say as I fold my arms.

"Since we have yet to scout the whole location inside the walls, I agree. So, how do we split? Each room has a double bed, and we can fit say, three to four people in each room, any more and we'll have a hard time resting." Rika then speaks up.

"Which means we need at least two rooms. Since there are eight of us. And I think it would be better we don't split too thin yet" She continues.

"Yea, but out of the eight of us one can't hold guard." I fold my arms as I motion toward Alice with my head, Rika nods.

"Hmm, so we're left with an extra." Rika scratches her forehead as she looks at the rest of the group.

"No, I can, help..." Alice tries to protest, only to let out a big yawn and close her eyes...

"We'll handle this munchkin, don't worry." Saya pats Alice on the head with a smile. Pushing the sleepy kid on her side.

"So, if we split into three-hour shifts, that's three teams and a total of six hours of sleep." She continues.

"I am willing to take the middle shift." Khota then raises his hand.

"I know it's the worst shift you can have since you essentially sleep three hours twice instead of six straight." He adds.

"Asami will go with Khota, she did nothing up until now, she wants to help." Asami nods.

"And how will the other teams split?" Rika asks as she tilts her head. At that moment, both Saya and Saeko turned to look at me.

"We'll have to split based on how efficient we are at keeping guard." I respond as I fold my arms.

"You mean?" Saya asks as she arks an eyebrow.

"Example, you and Shizuka team up and a corpse walks up the stairs in the middle of the night. How will you deal with it?" I ask.

"I'll shoot it." Saya answers flatly.

"And if you miss? It's going to be pitch black, the only thing you'll have is a flashlight." I shake my head.

"I uhhh..." Saya narrows her eyes and glances away.

"Rika can go with Shizuka, I will go with Saya. You and Alice can sleep." Saeko then speaks up. Saya glances at Saeko, then turns to me.

"Yea, you did most of the work so far, so you should rest." Saya nods.

"I agree with the duo. We can handle it." Rika adds.

"Khohta, you and Asami can handle it too?" I ask as I turn to the duo.

"Asami has been training at shooting with Khota. She will be able to protect evrybody, do not worry!" Asami responds, as she salutes at me?

"Fine by me then." I answer with a nod.

"What? No ' Hur-hur-hur, I'm a munly-mun, got' t do the hard stuff!" Rika chuckles as she tries to impersonate a, drunk truck driver?

"I'm a tired 'mun'. So no, I don't want to do the hard stuff." I sigh.

"Alright, what rooms should we use?" Saya asks right after.

"Umm, the room behind us and the room on the other side of the house are clean. I also mopped them." Shizuka responds as she points at the big room next to us, then towards the opposite side.

"Hmm. Unless corpses learn how to fly, the only spot of danger is the staircase right here. So I don't see a problem splitting like that." Rika taps her cheek as she speaks.

"So we'll split like that then~" Shizuka nods.

"Who'll sleep where then?" Rika asks.

"Asami thinks Alice should be on the further side." Asami then speaks up. The rest of the group nods.

"Naier, you should sleep in the room near the staircase, in case we need extra muscle." Rika then adds, I nod back.

"What about the rest?" Saya asks as she folds her arms.

"Hmm, well I and Shizuka can sleep in the same room with Alice. Or you want me to sleep with Naier?" Rika 'asks' back as she leans toward Saya with a smirk.

"I'll kick you." Saya flatly declares with a frown.

"A, Asami and Khota will sleep with Alice after Shizuka and Rika take their turn." Asami responds.

"What about when Saya and Saeko will be on guard?" Rika asks with a tilted head.

"Oh, then, um... uhhhh..." And Asami was out of ideas.

"Just wake me up with Saya and Saeko. I'll just go to sleep during the day if it's that much of a problem." I lift my hands to shoulder height as I shrug.

"Ha, planning to skip digging day huh? But fine by me." Rika laughs through her nose as she folds her arms.

And after a few seconds...

"... So, umm. Who is going to shower first?" Shizuka then asks.

"I am, I shoved my arm in a bathtub full of corpse blood, and, whatever other crap I don't want to know about. I can feel the ickiness growing on my arm. I'm going first." Saya declares.

"Well, we got a one-liter bottle of water for every person. I think the ones that are not very dirty, like Khota and Asami should go first, I don't mind using their water again to save a bottle or two." Rika shakes her head.

"Ughh, I can't stay like this..." Saya mumbles.

"Then strip?" Rika casually shrugs.

"You strip!" Saya shouts back with a frown.

"I intend to. But if you want me to take em off right now, who am I to argue~" Rika responds as she starts to unzip her overalls. Khota's eyes glued towards Rika's white undershirt. Much to Asami's dismay.

"Ughh! Fine! I'll go later! Go shower already!" Saya turns to look towards the opposite side with an exaggerated groan as she starts tapping her foot.

"What about clothes? I know I got some for me in the car but..." I add as I fold my arms.

"I probably have some spares we could use." Saeko responds.

"Uhhh, don't think this is going to work." I tilt my head as I turn to look at Shizuka, who just tilts her head as well with an questionable, unaware expression.

"Pervert..." Saya mumbles right after.

"Actually, it won't work for you either." I add as I turn to Saya, who just darts her sight at me, with her eyes wide open.

"S, shut up!" Saya mumbles as she turns to face her upper body away from me.

"Now now Naier, keep the sexy talk for when you two, sorry. Three are alone~" Rika chuckles.

"W, what sexy talk!" Saya shouts back as she glares at Rika, who just backs as she keeps chuckling, lifting her hands in a surrendering motion, Saya just lets out a haunty 'hummf' as she turns to look away again.

Saeko just kept glancing at her chest, or was she looking at the ground?

"... You are all, very mean..." Asumi mumbles as she keeps looking away.

"I still like you as you are..." Khota responds, causing the petite cop to turn towards Khota with a deep blush. Hell, I could almost see the sparkly pink flower background appearing behind them with how they were staring at each other now...

"Damn, think these two just overthrew you in the lovely-dovely level." Rika folds her arms as she keeps looking at the short cop.

"I was never much for sugar talking so, sure, I guess." I shrug.

"Besides, we also have some loose-fitting clothes in the Humvee as well. I'm sure nobody would mind wearing a size or two bigger than normal right now." Rika continues.

"I have brought some clothes too! They are a really good brands too!" Shizuka adds excitedly. The girls just turn to look at Shizuka, then look back at each other.

"So who goes first." Saya asks.

"Muuu! Don't ignore me!" Shizuka pouts as she lightly stomps her foot on the floor, bringing her hands next to her hips.

"Me and Khota will go first, we can take Alice too." Asami responds.

"Then I'll go after them with Shizuka, since we're really not that dirty either." Rika adds, Shizuka just kept looking away with an 'angry' pout.

"That leaves us three." I respond as I turn to look at Saeko and Saya.

"Other than my arm I'm not dirty..." Saya mumbles.

"Uhh, on my side, I'm actually covered in gear from head to toe. My clothes probably need a good wash, but me myself, shouldn't be all 'that' dirty. Blood and guts side." I add as I shrug.

"So I should go last then." Saeko then adds, glancing at her hip. And yea, considering she went up close and personal with her, usual attire, she looked a lot like a certain blood-soaked, zombie-slaying bikini-toting demon samurai...

A few seconds later, Asami and Khota left.

"We should actually block the stairs with some furniture, for good measure." I point at the staircase next to me as I speak.

"Let's put a desk or something then." Rika nods.

"There should be a relatively heavy one on my father's quarters." Saeko adds as she turns to walk towards the big room.

And so, me and the girls walked into the room.

Thanks to the windows, visibility was still pretty good, and the view from said windows had the garden in full view, along with the dojo and warehouse.

Inside the room, on the right side, was a big double bed pushed against the upper corner. The windows over the headrest of the bed, a nightstand next to it, and a wardrobe in the gap between the bed and the wall opposite to the windows.

Ahead of us was a mat with what I think was a tea kettle. Or well, considering how boiling hot that man wanted his tea, a mini volcano.

And on the left side, the desk Saeko mentioned, some papers scattered on it, along with a comfy-looking office chair.

(... This room can't be called mine till there's a gaming pc in it...)

Holding that though, we head to the table and drag it back out, thankfully it fitted through the door.

"Before we block it, keys, need to get our clothes no?" I turn to Rika as I extend my arm.

"Oh right. Can't be walking around topless now can we." Rika chuckles as she hands me the keys.

I just shake my head and start going down the stairs.

"Naier wait, I will come as well." Saeko speaks up as she follows behind me. The rest pushing the desk against the handrails of the stairs as we went down...

And so, me and Saeko walked towards the garage in silence.

The moment we reached it...

"Naier, wait." Saeko speaks up again, then walks past me and though only checks the whole garage by herself, then lies down flat and checks under the car...

I walk up to her as she gets up.

"There is nothing here. It is safe." She says as she turns to look at me.

"Yea..." I nod as I head to the trunk, and open it.

I then check the bags, turning to glance at Saeko a few seconds later. To find that she was still restlessly throwing glances around the garage.

(... She's being way too jumpy...)

"Something bothering you?" I ask as I pick two bags with clothes. Saeko turns to look at me with a hint of surprise, before she lowers her head slightly.

"Sorry, I, can not seem to calm myself down..." She responds as she turns to glance at me again with a slight smile.

"Come on, a good night's sleep and you'll be as good as new." I walk up to her as I pass both bags over my shoulder. Then pat her shoulder.

"Am I though?..." She mumbles back.

"I still can not shake that feeling of dread over me, from when I saw you get bit." She adds as she turns to look at me with a worried, almost distraught expression.

I move my hand to the lower side of her cheek.

"Saeko, I'm not going anywhere." I whisper as I run my thumb on her cheek.

Saeko shakes her head. Closing her eyes and lowering her head.

"Forgive me, I, I never felt this anxious before." She mumbles as she keeps her head lowered.

"I nearly lost you right in front of my eyes. Now just thinking that you might have to go outside alone, it scares me so much that I start to feel sick..." She adds as she lifts her head to look at me and an anxious look, gripping the ribbon on her shirt.

"I, do not know what to do Naier. I feel like I am going to go crazy the more I try to think about it, I, I, can not..." She continues as she tightens her grip on her shirt even more, fighting to keep her eyes open as tears started to form in their corners.

I, didn't speak back, I just slid my hand from her cheek to the back of her neck, and pushed her on me.

Saeko kept gripping her ribbon with one hand, letting her sword fall on the ground, digging her fingers in the side of my vest with her other hand. Nuzzling her face against my neck...

This, must have been the very first time. I ever heard Saeko sob...

To the awesome people who joined as supporters/donors. You all have my thanks.

co-op

Krieger Techpreist, 1. He's probably strolling about inside rosewood city looking for heads to munch on 2. Thanks 3. Nope ain't happening. 4. NEVA his luck will forever be shiet (Until it isn't)

OechsnerC, guest that loves it, Malgus123, : Thank you

magikuser28: There ain't no evil umbrellas here, or raccoons. And yea, normally now it'd be a few chapters dealing in that matter.

REYZERO : Dead island 2 is still rather far away, to the actual point that the story might be finished by then. Also, all my new chapters are 4-6 k words, this one ain't any different in terms of length.

jarjarhead: There are always gonna be storms, question is, how violent are they gonna be?

Freddielebron : Stories that aim to be a lemon tree don't take 51 chapters to bloom into a lemon, what did you expect that far in xD?

Cubias: Honestly I want to know if there are stories that are smut focused and last more than 5-10 chapters. (And are not a constant fackfest)

Scaunders: I was honestly thinking of it, but I didn't want to deal with a tsunami of whining insult reviews xD

Rabcor : As I had stated, I no longer work on this story as much as I used to, as it takes too much of my time. You got to thank the few people supporting this whole writing gig as it is that I had not put the whole thing on hiatus- dropped- given it to some other dude.

Boomer14 : Thank you, and welcome to the waiting club xD

(... Nope...)

I close my eyes and let out a sigh.

(... Nuh-uh...)

I open my eyes again...

(I can't, fall asleep again, no way...)

I sigh again as I try to move, the word being tried, since I had two people latched on to me right now...

Now, this was not really something 'that' new. Since I have slept with Saeko and Saya again. What 'was' new, was how it all ended up to this...

You see, after what happened in the garage, Saeko essentially refused to let go of me after we returned. To the point that, we 'might' have ended up taking that bath together. And Saya 'might' have got wind of it thanks to a certain sniper, and ended up bursting into the room, and joined the scene...

After that. Well, nobody really cares about that crap right? Let's just say that they are at least wearing underwear now...

(... Wonder how many death flags I triggered yesterday. Or does it count as today since it was so late at night?...)

Glancing to my right, over a sleeping pinkette and towards the rest of the room, I find it dimly lit.

The sky, which slightly visible from the windows over my head, showed that it was still dark outside, but not entirely, as I could actually see pretty well. In other words.

(It's going to be sunrise soon? Hmm, I am pretty sure we went to sleep at around twelve, so our shift should be at around six. So our shift should be just as the sun starts to rise...)

I take a deep breath before turning to look to my left, Saeko sleeping with a peaceful expression next to me...

Thing is, even though I came to the conclusion that I could no longer sleep, I could also not get up. Not with how Saeko and Saya were leaning on me. Unless I woke them up that is...

So, I decided to try and just, stand still on the bed. And I did so, for like two minutes.

(... This is much harder than I thought...)

I grumble under my breath as 'everything' was slowly starting to bother me. How is it when your shoulder feels like something is squeezing it and stretching does not help, or when your nose is itchy but you can't scratch it. Well think that, but everywhere. So it didn't take too long...

"Hmuu..." Until I annoyed Saya enough for her to silently moan as she rubbed her face against me, slowly opening her eyes to stare at nothing.

She then blinked a couple of times before taking a deep breath, pulling herself away from me to stretch with an audible groan, before sprawling on the bed as she closed her eyes again, using her hand to tap around to the nightstand next to her. Until she found her target, that being her glasses, which she groggily placed on her face.

She then opened her eyes again to stare at the ceiling. Letting out another deep breath as she heaved. Until she finally turned to glance towards me, to find me staring at her. She then turned to look towards the ceiling again, before turning her whole body to lean on me again.

"Morning..." She mumbles as she nuzzles her face between the pillow and me. Closing her eyes with a slight sigh again.

(Huh... I figured she'd snap and start shou...)

"Gkhh!" And my thoughts got interrupted by a sudden jab to my sides, from Saya's side. Causing me to essentially bump on Saeko. Who let out a small groan as she leaned away and raised her upper body off the bed as she used her arm as leverage, opening her eyes to stare at what just bumped into her, aka, me.

"Oi, wh..." And another jab.

"... Everything below my waist hurts because of you, stupid idiot..." Saya mumbles right after.

"Uhhh..." I just glanced around.

"Stupid" She added as she thews another, albeit lighter jab.

"You were the one that tackled me to the ground though..." I respond.

"It was because you gave the most stupid response I've ever heard..." Saya lifts her head and frowns at me as she speaks.

"I just asked if you wanted to join. Which you, uhh, kinda did?..." I tilt my head as I arch an eyebrow.

"Humf, and you ended up biting off more than you could chew. You nearly dropped me afterward..." Saya turns to glance away with a slight blush on her face.

"How would I know that your legs would give in so quickly? You were the one who told me to 'Switch gears'..." I mumble...

"Nobody told me that Saeko would decide to gang up on me!" Saya frowns as she throws a quick jab to my sides again.

"You did not really look all that stable even before I joined though. And it looked so much fun, I could not hold myself.." Saeko, who was now with her eyes wide open and her head on my chest, responds with a small smirk.

"Fun, smun. I nearly passed out because of you two..." Saya whispers as she narrows her eyes.

"Uhh, actually, you 'did' pass out." I whisper.

"What..." Saya turns to look at me with a blank stare.

"... You don't remember waking up next to the bathtub? You even started complaining that I cheated and stole your turn." Saeko responds with a giggle. Saya then looks at Saeko, then back at me.

"I demand all the extra time she got!" She lifts her upper body up to 'glare' at me.

"Losers can not demand." Saeko responds as she tightens her arms around me with a smug smile.

"I'm not a loser!" Saya barks back.

"I was not the one that passed out." Saeko calmly responds.

"You did not get tagged teamed." Saya blurts out as she narrows her eyes.

"Not my fault you chickened out when you had the chance." Saeko shrugs.

" Ch, chickened out?! W, why youuu..." I could actually see Saya's eye twitch now...

"Ummm, are you three awake?" And a knock on the door, as a female voice spoke from the other side. Causing all three of us to turn towards the door.

"You were blaring like an alarm Saya, no point turning quiet now." I chuckle.

"S, shut up..." Saya mumbles.

"Asami does not want to bother you, but your shift is starting soon and umm..." Asami responds from the other side of the door.

"Yea, we'll be up in a bit." I respond, loud enough for Asami to hear.

"Hmm, guess we should get up" Saeko adds as she stretches, then casually pulls the covers off her and gets up to walk on the narrow path between the bed and the wall, heading to the wardrobe that was next to the bed's footboard to get her clothes.

"Well, guess we should be getting up.." I take a deep breath as I start to get up, only for Saya to push me down, and climb on top of me.

"I demand the time you owe me." She declares as she essentially sits on top of me.

"Uhh, I really don't think this is the..."

I didn't even manage to finish that though when I felt the bed move, Saeko popping behind Saya, wearing a set of black, unbuttoned pants, and a white, also unbuttoned long-sleeved shirt. Only one of the armguards loosely tried on her arm.

"Ohhh, you demand?" Saeko giggles as she sticks herself behind Saya. The pinkette let out a short yelp as she tries to move away, to no avail.

"Aaah. L, let me ghhaa!" Saya starts squirming as she tries to break off from a giggling Saeko, again, to no avail...

So, yea. Yesterday I kinda found out that Saeko sort of enjoys 'Co-Op'. Much to Saya's surprise, and dismay...

"Want to join in?" Saeko then asks with an almost casual smile.

"As much as I want to, we really don't have time. Also Saya seems about ready to start crying so, please let her go?" I ask as I keep staring at the event unfolding on top of me.

Saeko just giggles slightly and finally releases the poor pinkette, who quickly slides to the top part of the bed next to my head, staring at Saeko with a frown that was as pronounced as her blush.

"You're an even bigger pervert than him! How could yesterday be your first time! " She yelps as she tightens her arms around her chest.

"Hmm? You seemed to enjoy yourself even more than me yesterday though, considering it was your first time too." Saeko just tilts her head.

Saya just keeps glaring at Saeko.

"Though I do apologize if I went overboard. I might have let my excitement take a hold of me." Saeko then bows slightly at Saya, causing her to blankly stare at the purple-haired Samurai...

"Well, you two seem to be getting along, wonder when you'll decide to cut the middle man." I chuckle as I also sit on the bed.

"Humff, getting jealous?" Saya huffs while she keeps hugging herself.

"Ehh? You bounced back fast, considering how you were moaning a second ago." I respond as I lift an eyebrow.

"S, shut up. Perverts, the both of you." Saya mumbles as she throws a quick, weak punch to my shoulder, then turns to look away.

"Hmmm? If you do not like it, you can always leave us 'perverts' alone." Saeko adds as she smirks, while at the same time she starts buttoning up her shirt.

"No way I'm leaving him alone with you, you're dangerous." Saya responds as she starts to relax. Saeko just laughs through her nose as she gets off the bed again.

"I would never hurt him." She adds she picks the rest of her armor from the ground.

"I love him more than I love myself." She continues as she turns towards Saya. Who just kept staring at Saeko in silence.

(... De-ja-vu...)

"I will wait outside, do not take too long, Asami and Khota are probably very tired and we are denying their sleep time the longer we take." Saeko turns to walk towards the door as she speaks, before opening it and stopping by the door frame as she turns towards us again.

"Oh and. Good morning, and thank you. I had a wonderful time yesterday." She adds with a smile before exiting the room, closing the door behind her. Leaving me and Saya to just keep staring at the door.

"That's not fair..." Saya mumbles as she lowers her head slightly.

"How the hell am I supposed to compare to, that." Saya then points at the door with a frown as she turns to me.

"What do you mean?" I ask as I tilt my head.

"... You know very well what I mean. She's, she's much better than me..." Saya mumbles as she lowers her hand, a worried look on her face as she turned to look away.

"And? You were much cuter than her." I respond as I shrug. Saya turns to glance at me with a deep blush on her face.

"She still was b..."

Before Saya could start complaining again I decided to shut her up...

And a few seconds later I pull my head back. Saya stares at me with almost unfocused eyes as she tries to lean toward me.

"Now, don't get greedy, remember we need to get dressed before Khota and Asami fall asleep standing up." I chuckle as I stop her by putting my hand on her collarbone.

"... More..." Saya mumbled as she kept staring at me.

"Hmm. nope~" I respond as I give her side a squeeze, Saya letting out a whiny moan as she wiggles about.

"Come on, let's get up. The sooner we finish with the remaining tasks at hand, the sooner we can do something more, fun." I add as I also get off the bed, and head to pick up my clothes, which were neatly folded inside the open wardrobe.

-10 minutes later-

"Maybe it would have been better if you took the first shift, we could have just let you sleep late..." Khota mumbles apologetically.

"It's fine, I'll just skip the shovel work." I chuckle back.

"Now go get some sleep." I add as I pat his back, then turn to sit on the stairs first step, glancing at the floor below us. The desk now sitting right in front of the stairs on the bottom floor. Apparently Rika figured it'd be better to see the corpses before they are on the stairs. No idea how we will bring the damn thing up again though.

"By the way, when should we wake everybody up?" Saya, who was wearing knee-length athletic tights under the green shorts she had from the mall, and the brown 'hq' shirt along with her usual pink shoes asks.

"In like, three hours from now should be good enough." Khota nods back before finally trotting away with Asami. Leaving me, Saeko, and Saya alone.

"What are the plans for today?" Saeko asks as she moves to sit next to me. Then slides closer to me, slightly leaning her shoulder on me.

"First and foremost, we need to check the dojo and warehouse, make sure nothing is still crawling in there. After that, get the corpse bodies outside. We will probably have to dig a place to throw them in and burn them. Normally, you'd need something to fuel the fire to cremate a person, but for some reason corpses are rather flammable, probably because they lost a lot of fluid by blood loss? Dono. Point is, if we dig a hole away from trees to contain the chance of a wildfire and then light it up, we could probably reduce total mass of the bodies. No idea about the bones though, don't think a normal fire will be enough." I sigh as I stretch

"It's not, not by a long shot." Saya responds as she leans on the outer railing of the stairs, bending over to look down the stairs.

"How deep should the hole be?" Saeko then asks again.

"Depends how many corpses we'll burn at a time and how tall the remaining mass will become, but we want the flames to not flail about wildly. So we'll have to make it deep enough to keep the flames bellow ground level and watch for the wind too." I put my elbow on my leg and lean my chin on my hand as I speak.

"And once all that is done?" Saya asks as she turns to look at me.

"Then the fun part begins." I chuckle as I close my eyes.

"We will need to check the secondary pumps for water, the generator, and where we can control the solar panels from. We will also need to return to town for some stuff. Books, the GPS, maybe some clothes. I know we also have a good water purifier in the Humvee, but having more won't hurt. Also, we could do with some stuff that could help with depression and boredom. Board games, a ball or something." I sigh as I open my eyes.

"Huh? Depression? What do you mean?" Saeko asks as she tilts her head.

"The moment the group will start to settle down and will have nothing to do but think, there's a good chance they'll really realize that they ain't getting their old lives back any time soon. At the airport we were still partly on edge, even before getting sent to the camps. And the human brain has a tendency to create problems out of thin air if you let it unattended. So yea, we will need some things that are not 'for survival' to pass the time." I answer with a small nod. Then turn to look at Saya.

"Now, back to the matter at hand, considering nobody knows how pumps or solar boards even work, the trip will probably have to take priority. Just hope we can find some books that can help. Because I'll be counting on you in learning how that stuff works." I continue. Saya just nods back.

"Do we even know where the bookstores are? Wandering aimlessly is not a very good idea." Saeko then asks.

"Maybe we won't have to." Saya shrugs.

"I figured we'll need to learn all that stuff, so I took whatever books I found in the airport, my bag is actually full of books." Saya continues.

"That, is good. But the stuff we need is a bit 'too' specialized. Did you find the exact stuff we need?" I ask back.

"No, but I don't need to, I can figure it out myself once I can get the basics down. I am a genius after all." Saya turns to me with a rather confident smirk.

(Just don't blow us sky-high genius, eh?...)

"Worst case we can ask my father, via the radio. Though we need to start the generator for that first." Saeko responds.

"That should not be 'that' hard. These generators come with a manual that is still probably inside the premise if nobody threw it

away like an idiot, maybe inside the storage next to the generator?" Saya asks back.

"Hmm, yea that could work too. So, in terms of books, what do you think we'll need?" I ask as I turn to Saya. She blinks at me for a few seconds, almost looking surprised that I asked her. She then closes her eyes and lowers her head to think

"Hmm, farming is a definite one. Maybe carpentry so we can patch up the lower floor. We could also use some for basic foraging and hunting or trapping. And knowing how to reinforce our clothes with extra layers without making them cumbersome to wear could be good too. We could also do with knowing how to maintain tools correctly. Saeko knows about swords and Khota about guns. But what about normal tools and electrical appliances? We'll have to be able to fix them ourselves if they break down from now on. I know some of the books I got fall in the categories I mentioned, but I need to recheck them to make sure. But honestly, anything related to outdoor survival and maintenance could be a goldmine for us right now. I mean, if the Humvee breaks down, can Rika fix it for sure? " Saya then lifts her head and turns to look at me again.

"Hmm, looks like asking where the nearest library is, is something we'll have to do once we get the radio operational. Something Khota can hopefully do." I lean back and put my hands behind my back.

"Why Khota?" Saya asks as she frowns slightly, questionably arching an eyebrow.

"Because it looked like something the military would use." I chuckle as I keep looking down the stairs.

"Oh, makes sense..." Saya lets out a small sigh through her nose as she smiles, turning to also look down.

"But yea, we will have our hands full. So for now, one step at a time. Let's make this place easier to sleep in to first. I'm pretty sure that once we have cleared and cleaned this place, it will be a good boost

of morale for everybody. Having a place where you can just, sit. It will also be easier to sit and think about our next step if we don't have to constantly watch over our backs." I take a deep breath as I close my eyes.

"Hmmm, I agree. Though personally, yesterday was all the morale boost I needed~" Saeko giggles slightly as she wraps her arms around my arm, then places the side of her head on my shoulder...

I reflexively turn to glance at Saya to find her staring at me with a 'Why you little shit' expression.

She then leans away from the stair's railing, walks up next to me, and proceeds to sit, or more like crash on my leg, before leaning her back on me.

"Humf. Just so you know, he found me to be cuter than you." Saya adds with a pouty tone.

"Ohh, really?" Saeko asks as she giggles.

"Well, I never really tried to act cute. But, I guess I will just have to make up for my lack of cuteness, in another way." She continues as she finishes her sentence with an almost, provoking whisper.

"Hey! Stop trying to seduce him!" Saya blurts out as she turns to face Saeko.

"Oi, people are sleeping here." I make a 'silence' motion with my finger.

"Ah, crap." Saya's eyes go wide as she turns to look around.

"But she's being a pervert!" Saya then, whisper shouts, as she points at the giggling purple-haired Samurai.

"Hmm? And where is the problem with that?" Saeko asks back with a small smirk. Causing Saya to just stare with a blank expression, no comeback coming out of her mouth.

"The way I see it, an intimate relationship like that would just make the bond I have with him stronger." She continues as she tightens her arms around my arm. Saya just kept staring with a frown, and a deep blush on her face.

"W, well you're still a pervert." Saya folds her arms and turns to look away and a haughty 'hummf!'. Saeko just, giggled in response.

(... I don't know what's weirder, that Saeko just does not seem to care about being called a pervert. Or that she so casually stated that she thinks it might be good too. Something in the back of my head is telling me I'ma end up like a rookie adventurer in a monstergirl universe if I'm not careful...)

"... I'm hungry..." Saya then mumbles as she turns to look down the stairs.

"Didn't we bring some rations up with us yesterday?" I ask as I tilt my head.

"These taste like crap. I want normal food..." Saya grumbles.

"My, are you getting soft on me Saya." I chuckle as I poke her side, causing her to slightly bend her body away from my hand.

"We could get some canned food from the third floor actually. The room with the radio. Though I think it's better if we wait for everybody to wake up." I add as I turn to look behind me. In response, Saya's stomach just whines back for her.

"N, not my fault. I always used to eat after waking up..." Saya mumbles as she embarrassingly hugs her stomach.

"Really? You didn't seem to do so up until now." I respond as I turn towards the pinkette.

"In the airport I've always eaten after waking up." Saya flatly answers back.

"I'm actually quite hungry myself. But I agree with Naier, we should wait for everybody." Saeko adds with a calm voice. Saya just grumbled under her breath, accepting the fact that food was still, hours away...

"By the way, you managed to take the laptop with you?" I ask right after.

"Yea, I took off the battery and kept it separate just in case somebody tried to see if it worked. It should be in the Humvee." Saya nods.

"Goot, still need to see the thing's GPU, CPU, RAM and PSU" I nod back.

"Gamer nerd." Saya snickers as she keeps looking down the stairs.

"I'm going to mark a settlement on your map for that." I respond with a flat tone. Saya just turns to look at me with a confused expression, then turns to look at Saeko.

"See, gamer nerd." She shrugs, before turning to look back down the stairs.

"If I was a fairy I'd tell you to listen. But I'm not. So whatever." I shrug back.

"A jeep? A sheep? And a ram?..." Saeko whispers to herself as she looks away from me and Saya.

(... She can't be serious right now, can she?...)

Ignoring the pondering Saeko, I turn to look down the stairs again.

And so, time passed in silence. Me and the two girls essentially just talking about nothing.

-About an hour later-

Saya was now laying down, her head on my leg, lazily staring down the stairs. Saeko was with her head on my shoulder. The food boxes from the third floor down here with us, since we had nothing better to do we carried them down here, none em opened by the way. And I was actually impressed with how much self-control Saya had too. Not that that stopped her from being herself...

"How long until we can wake the rest up?" Saya asks as she keeps staring down the stairs.

"Uhh, about two hours." I respond as I check my watch.

"Ughh..." Saya just groans...

"I know you want that spaghetti and meatballs you saw. But you got to hold on." I chuckle. In response, Saya's stomach grumbles.

"Arghh! Don't talk about food you stupiiiiid!" Saya quickly turns to throw a quick bite at my thigh as she whines...

"Oi, no biting." I throw a quick slap at her rear in retaliation as I speak, Saya letting out a short yelp as she lifts her head to glare at me, a slight blush on her face.

"Pervert." Saya mumbles as she rubs the spot I just slapped.

"Say's you." I chuckle back at her.

"W, what's that supposed to mean?!" Saya blurts out as she frowns at me.

"Considering yesterday you..."

"S, shut up." Saya cuts me off as she shoves her cheek on my leg again. Also turning to stare at the stairs.

(Heh, embarrassed of how, not you, you were huh?)

"Uhh, Saeko, you Ok? You've been awfully..." I turn to look towards our purple hair Samurai, to find that she has actually fallen asleep on my shoulder...

"Quiet..." I mumble as I turn to look down the stairs again.

"If a corpse pops up now, we'll be so underprepared..." I sigh as I start petting Saya's head.

"It's not like it'll be able to go past the desk before we get ready, so what's the problem?" Saya asks back.

"True." I answer I keep absentmindedly patting Saya's head.

And few minutes passed like that...

(I'm surprised she's not whining that she ain't a dog or something...)

I tilt my head to look at Saya, only to find out that she, much like Saeko, decided to sleep on the job...

(... I know I said we'll be able to relax, but this is just absurd...)

Nonetheless, I left the two sleeping beauties to their devices, after I took Saya's glasses off. Worst case, they will just have a rude awakening...

Though now the problem was that I was keeping guard by myself, and I could not really move about, or talk. Or do much of anything...

(Got to wonder if we'll be able to grow some food here when our total knowledge in farming as a group is sitting at an absolute zero...)

With that though I put my hand behind my back and start to lean on it.

(More importantly though, I really, really want to play some video games now. Since I know we have a laptop, and there is a good chance we'll have electricity, and I have some games in my bag,

along with the two controllers. Guess Saya's right huh? Oh I regret nothing..)

And time passed in boring silence. But hey, better boring than corpses showing up at my stairs.

-30/ 40 minutes later-

So you can guess that with all that silence, when a door opened in the hallway on the other side of the building, I heard it loud and clear. Not that whoever opened that door tried to be quiet, as I could also hear their footsteps pretty clear too.

And sure enough, Rika lazily popped up from the end of the hallway straight ahead of me. Rubbing her eyes as she turned to look at me...

"Ahh, Morning Naier." She lifts her arm to wave at me as she lets out a big yawn, then starts to walk towards me. The thing was...

"Morning. Uhh, can I ask why you are running around topless?" I respond as I essentially keep staring. I mean give me a break here...

And yea. Rika was essential wearing her lower underwear and, a bandage on her thigh. That's about it...

"Uhhh?" Rika groggily turns to look at herself, then lets out an uninterested, 'oh'.

"Have you ever spelt with Shizuka? She's way too clingy, got too hot under those boobs." She responds as she shrugs, not even trying to cover herself as she stops to lean on the railway next to me, turning to glance at the two sleeping girls.

"Not that you should be surprised to see a pair of boobs now by now. Something tells me you got enough of 'em yesterday." She adds as she makes a one-sided smirk at me.

"... You should know huh? Wonder who let Saya know..." I 'ask' as I arch an eyebrow.

"I'm just doing my part." Rika chuckles as she leans away from the railway, then turns her back to me as she stretches.

"AAaaanyway, I should go before the sleeping beasts wake up. Something tells me they won't be too happy to see me like this next to their, prey." She adds as she waves at me, then starts to walk away.

"... Well, that was. Weird..." I blink a couple of times as Rika disappears to the next hallway on the far end as lazily as she appeared.

(Something tells me Rika won't be too popular with certain girls here if 'that' is how she will be strolling around in the mornings...)

Yet it didn't take more than five minutes until Rika popped up again, this time wearing a pair of cargo pants and a skin-tight, white crop top.

Joining the 'lookout' as by her words, it was too boring for her to sit by herself.

So, the moment she got comfortable leaning on the railing next to me.

"Alright commando, split it~" She smirks at me as she leans in towards my direction.

"Who lasted longer?" She asks right after.

"This is confidential federal information." I respond flatly.

"Ahh? Don't be a stick in the mud now. Or, could it be? It was you wasn't it?" Rika chuckles as she backs off dramatically.

"Not that I blame you, going for two bombshells like that. Bit off more than you can chew at its finest." She adds as she laughs through her nose.

"Sure, yea, let's go with that." I shrug back.

"Oh come on, not even a little gloating? Kids your age would be waving a flag around for such an achievement." Rika sighs slightly as she shakes her head.

"These kids would also be long re-dead with their pants down their knees by now." I respond.

"Or really?" Rika chuckles slightly as she tilts her head.

"You tell me how far a teenager that thinks with his dick would get." I add.

"Touche." Rika lets out a small defeated sigh as lowers her head.

"Still, they're out cold." She then turns to look at the sleeping girls.

"While you woke up before the six-hour mark." I respond as I turn to look at her.

"I can't relax, we're not exactly safe if we have to keep guard on a damn staircase." Rika answers with a more serious tone as she turns to look down the stairs.

"Not going to deny that. Your wound is fine?" I ask right after.

"Awww, you're worried about me." And all seriousness goes out the window...

"But yea, it's all but healed to my eyes honestly, but I ain't the doctor of the house sooo..." Rika then adds as she saw that I was just staring at her.

"Good. Now let's hope today was the first and last day we had to keep guard on the stairs." I nod as I take a deep breath.

"Heh, I'd drink to that." Rika chuckles back.

"Something tells me you'd drink to anything right about now." I add as I smirk slightly.

"Oh how well you know me. But no. It's Shizuka that likes drinking her shocks off, not me. Which is funny, considering she really can't handle it." Rika answers as she casually shrugs...

"So, got any plans for today?" She then asks as she turns to me.

"We'll be cleaning, burning corpses, or mopping the blood off the ground." I answer with a small nod.

"I see, so we'll be digging holes after all." Rika sighs.

"Half of us, the other half will check the inside perimeter for any live corpses, we'll also have to break into the big warehouse. If not for checking for corpses, to see what they got in there." I take a deep breath before leaning slightly forward.

(Long day ahead. But hopefully, by the end of it, we will be able to call this place home.)

Soooo, you people might have noticed that the story is rated M. And if you probably can guess why xD. So yall can stop complaining about that one thing now. Once again, a thanks to ma supporters.

Lights in

All the peeps seeking the damn lemonade: No, I already said I ain't writing smut. Go read something else already ._....

About 'why M if no seeeeegs' : 'Fiction M can contain adult language, themes and suggestions. Detailed descriptions of physical interaction of sexual or violent nature is considered Fiction MA. Not my problem the site lets MA seep into M ._.

rharper909: Rei and Taka ain't going to appear, I actually had some side stories planned for some extra characters, these two included, but, ehh. Scrapped like a lot of things xD

Guest that loves it, mellenshot,OechsnerC :Thank you.

Krieger Techpreist :Curse all ye want, bigger chance my character chokes on a rabbit bone by now xD

Malgus123: Nobody expects the Spanish Inq... no wait...

jarjarhead: Just grab a cardboard box and go ham my friend.

Jub-erth: I've actually been looking at your work on Reddit, and I've responded to at least one of your posts as some random penguin, something about guessing the next character? Now from what I saw from your work, I'll probably use your cover for the story if it's half as good as the trio you made. As for ptreon, make my day xD. The more people support my writing the more I can write.

RadChaos897: We'll know soon enough.

thefoolswriter: It's way too early to be thinking about children xD. Having one of the girls being out of commission for 9-10 months, along with later having an extra person to feed that can not really offer anything back for years to come, especially when life is as

stable and safe as a rock balancing on the top of a crooked mountain.

szlekane: Good to see I surpassed expectations xD

Alphaaaa'N'Omeegas: Well, some people just can't get by with their day if they don't find something to complain about, but what can we do. And thanks.

Guest that's afraid of pussys: 32-bit doom's gate fart music intensifies.

"With the risk of being called a nerd, we could hook up the Tv with a console, so not a total waste." I fold my arms as I look at the big plasma Tv that was stashed on one of the long shelves that run the distance of the whole warehouse.

Thankfully, we found that said warehouse in the corner of the estate was untouched, no corpses or signs of break-in. Well, up until now that is, since we did break the lock to get it.

"You, just said it! You neeerd! Gaah! Why is this stupid thing so, heavy?!" Saya, who was trying to swing a sledgehammer we found inside the warehouse retorts, making an almost comical half spin as the sledge's momentum won over Saya's ability to stay balanced.

"Could we not also use it to see if we get any new emergency broadcasts?" Saeko then asks.

"Hah, you think the government will care to do that any time soon? They are probably still too busy picking their pieces off the ground. Especially considering that it will probably be the army that calls the shots now. Since the politicians will hide behind them for safety. Like how they all run to the airport the moment it was deemed safe. That's why Papa desided to work with them" Saya groans as she uses the sledgehammer as a crutch to lean on.

"We could also see if we could set up some cameras and link them to it." I add as I nod.

"The estate already has cameras." Saeko answers back.

"Really? Didn't see any." I arch an eyebrow as I turn toward Saeko.

"What would be the point of having them if they would be easily spotted? If somebody came all this here way to break in, visible cameras would not make much of a deterrent." She responds as she shrugs.

"True, but where is the camera room?" I ask back as I tilt my head.

"Hmm? We did not have one, my father had the cameras on his personal computer, he usually used a cable that he hooked to the machine that he used to connect to the internet." Saeko answers as she folds her arms.

"Internet? A router? So you got Ip cameras here? Hope they still work then. They should be rather easy to link em to our laptop if they are not fried. I also think I spotted the router in the room we slept in, next to the desk we dragged out." I turn to look around the warehouse as I spoke.

"Yes, that was the one." Saeko nods back at me.

"Well, we searched for corpses here. And the place was thankfully empty. So, the dojo left. Since we also scoured the estate's open area and found nothing. Nothing 'alive' anyway. This should be the last stop." I take a deep breath as I motion behind me with my head, towards the open warehouse gate, then turn around to walk.

"Let's get this over with. I want to see if fatso managed to figure out how the generator works or if I'll have to do everything myself." Saya groans slightly as she also starts to walk.

"Fatso huh? Sometimes I forget how mean you can be, what with how cuddly you've been with me lately." I chuckle as I keep walking.

"W, what stupid nonsense are you spouting?!" Saya quickly retorts.

So yea, apparently, Khota's family also had a generator in their house that was like the one here. And since he was an arm short, he asked to see if he can check it instead.

(I sorta forgot that Khota was also from a well-off family as well...)

And so, we exit the warehouse and into the small back garden, using the stone pathway that circled around a few small ponds and grassy patches towards the dojo.

"Kinda sad how all the koi here are dead..." Saya mumbled as we passed one of the ponds. The water's surface littered with the dead bodies of said fish.

"Not even one of them looks eaten. Corpses really do ignore animals. Or fish at least." I add as we keep walking.

"It's more like wild and street animals are too smart for corpses to catch if you ask me. Because aside from them, we have not seen a single live house pet. Or at least an animal that does not run away from us. No idea about the fish. Maybe it's because corpses seem to avoid diving in water? I'm just glad that animals don't seem to catch whatever this is." Saya sighs.

"True. And let's hope it stays that way, don't need zombie deers in my life right now..." I nod as I keep walking.

"Only deers? So bears would be fine?" Saeko asks as she tilts her head.

"This place has bears?..." I ask as I turn to look at Saeko.

"Hmm, there have been black bear sightings occasionally." Saeko answers with a small nod.

"... Great..." I sigh as I keep walking.

"So much about hunting rabbits in peace..." I chuckle as I shake my head.

"Look at the bright side, if animals don't get infected then the bears could actually benefit us by taking out the corpses that wander too close to their territory" Saya continues.

"Let's hope none of em decide that their territory includes this place as well. Huh, where's a bunch of chickens when you need em." I tap my mask as we close into the dojo.

"But it's not like we have the resources to keep animals here anyway. Or anybody with a base knowledge in livestock farming." I add with a slight shrug.

"I'm going to tell it from now. I am NOT, going to be tending to livestock." Saya blurts out right after.

(Princess much? Not that I'm surprised though.)

And with that, we reach the front, double door of the dojo...

"Huh, you locked the front doors with this?" I ask as I pull a loose end of a garden hose that was holding the front doors closed.

"We were short on lock pads." Saya scoffs sarcastically.

"Ok, all set? The door opens inside or outside?" I ask as I twirl the hose around my wrist.

"Inside." Saeko calmly responds as she puts her hand on her blade's hilt, Saya readies her Luger and nods.

With a deep breath, I quickly untie the garden hose, before kicking the door in, causing it to open with a loud thud.

"Did you 'have' to kick it in?" Saya asks with a sigh.

"I always wanted to do that." I answer flatly as I look at the insides...

That were, a fucking mess for the lack of a better term. While not very brightly lit, as light seeped in only through the small rectangular windows that run along the upper edge of the walls before they connected to the ceiling, and the door we just opened. There were signs of battle visible throughout the whole dojo. And not just from the bullet marks that the trio of girls was probably responsible for when they cleared the place.

The place looked like an actual battlefield. Katanas in various states of damage were stuck, tossed, and scattered around on the surface of the dojo's floor, body parts littering the whole place, not mentioning that I could no longer make out the floor's original color from all the blood...

The whole place screamed...

"Last stand huh." I whisper as I keep looking around.

"Most likely. My father and his acquaintances had real Katanas in here, along with the ones used for training. Possible that the people here made a last stand by gathering here to arm up." Saeko whispered calmly as she stopped next to me.

"How will we clean this mess..." Saya mumbles right after.

"I think we have bigger problems than just cleaning..." I respond as I point deeper inside the dojo, amidst the bodies on the ground I could make out a couple that still shuffled about on the ground.

"I'll go first. If only because I'm actually covering my legs..." I speak up as I start to walk.

"W, well scuze me..." Saya mumbles as she tries to lower her short shorts, though there was not much to lower with what she was wearing.

"I am wearing boots and leg guards though." Saeko just tilts her head as she starts to follow me.

"Yea, but cargo pants win over stocking." I respond as I chuckle, lifting my rifle to aim at the moving bodies I could make out.

"Two, three, five? Or four? Ah whatever..." I take a deep breath, and pull the trigger.

One, two, three, four times...

I then lower my gun and look at the bodies again.

"Oh, there, another one started moving" I lift my gun again and aim to my left. And pull the trigger again.

"Uhh..." Before turning to look around again...

"Another one..." I mumble as I lift my gun again.

And again. And again...

-Five minutes later-

"... I'm this close to just lighting this place up on fire and calling it a day." I sigh as I pull the trigger again.

"I would rather we don't do that." Saeko adds as she points at another moving body on the ground.

"Well noise causes them to move, so we should be fine as long as we can cause a lot of noise right?" I ask as I tilt my head.

"I guess so." Saya nods slightly.

"Good. Then. Saya, sing. I'm almost out of ammo." I reply with a flat tone as I turn to stare at her. Saya stares back at me with a blank expression.

"W, what are you saying you Dofus! You sing!" Saya retorts as she frowns at me.

"Fiiiine..." I groan, then take a deep breath. Saya's eyes actually going wide as...

"To save our mother Earth from any alien attack!~" I start singing...

"Aaaahh! What are you doing! Stop stop!" Saya quickly cuts me off as she starts to flail her arms.

"What? You told me to sing." I respond as I turn to glance at her.

"I didn't think you would though!" Saya flatly answers as she brings her hands next to her hips.

"Jeez..." I just chuckle as I shake my head and turn to look back at the bodies in the dojo.

"Normally one of you is supposed to continue now..." I mumble as I look through my scope.

"I never heard of a song that starts like this though." Saeko apologetically shrugs her shoulders.

"Well neither did I. And I wouldn't even if I did." Saya adds as she folds her arms.

And a few seconds later...

"From vicious giant insects, who have once again come back." And a new voice speaks up from behind us, with a tone as flat as a pancake.

And turning towards that voice, we find Khota staring at us.

"What?" Saya asks with a confused frown.

"We'll unleash all our forces - we won't cut them any slack~" I continue as I take my free hand off my scar's handguard and motion my hand to the rhythm of the song.

"What?" And Saya turns to stare at me now.

"The EDF deploys!" Both me and Khota yell at the same time. Then I quickly turn to look behind me.

(Wouldn't it be stupid if a corpse had crept up behind me now?)

I chuckle under my breath as I turn to look at Khota again.

"Are you two retarded?" Saya groans as she shakes her head.

"Yes." I respond flatly to Saya.

"So, my fellow EDF trooper. What's the gig?" I ask as I turn to Khota again.

"Ah, I. Figured how the generator works, and I also found something you need to see." Khota responds with a smile as he points behind him, towards the second garage that was by the estate's kitchen.

"Hmm." I turn to look behind me again.

And after a few seconds of seeing nothing move.

"We have yet to fully check the place here. I'd rather not leave mid sweep." I respond as I turn to Khota again.

"Ah, well. We just found the solar panel's inverter and battery bank you see." Khota responds.

"... Close the door with the hose. We'll come again later." I respond flatly as I start to walk out.

"Really now?" Saya asks as she arks an eyebrow, a small smirk on her lips.

"Rika told me that the breakers in the main panel were switched off, and that the inverter itself was switched off as well." Khota continues as we 'lock' the dojo's door, I could honestly feel the excitement in his voice. Not that I blame him.

"Wait, so somebody closed em?" I ask right after. Khota nods.

"Rika seems to think so." He continues.

"Hmm. There are way too many corpses here for just people that could live here. And based on what Saeko's father told me, the place got overrun. So maybe there was infighting? Or another group of survivors tried to take the place by force? You know, sneaking in and shutting the place down, as it unlocks the front gates. But in the end they all got attacked by corpses while they were busy killing each other?" I shrug slightly as we start to walk.

"That would actually be rather poetic." Saeko adds.

"So, we flip the switches and see if we get lights or explosions?" I ask, Khota nods.

"I'd rather avoid the explosions." Khota adds with a slight chuckle.

"What? Mister Torque would be so disappointed in you right now. Next you're going to tell me you like laser weapons" I say as I fold my arms. Khota just laughs through his nose.

"So jokes aside, that should also bring water right? From the pumps that filter the groundwater?" I ask as I turn towards Saeko.

"I, do not know." Saeko shakes her head.

"I didn't see anything resembling pumps anywhere in the estate." Saya adds.

"Ahh a breaker in the main breaker box was separated from the group and had the words 'water pump' engraved over it. It almost

seemed as if it was added in later. That should be it I think." Khota continues.

"One huh, so we need to go check the riverside one at the intake spot?" I ask as I tilt my head. Saeko just, shrugs again with an apologetic expression.

"Do we though? Underground water patches and cracks refill when it rains. If that place has an underground 'lake', it means the geography here forces the water to congregate there. So I doubt eight people could run it dry, as long as we are not exceedingly wasteful." Saya folds her arms and lowers her head slightly as she tries to think.

"I guess that could be true, we just never used this house for long periods of time to strain test it. As my father used this place when he wanted to relax or go on a short vacation from his daily life." Saeko responds.

"Well, what we need the riverside pump for is for stuff like watering the soon to have farm and bathing. So worst-case scenario, we'll just get a crapton of barrels and learn to rain dance." I nod slightly as I pick up the pace.

And so, we continued straight towards the small garage by the estate's kitchen.

And upon reaching the side with the generator, Khota motions me towards the big rectangular metallic box.

"This button here should start it. But if you check here, it shows that it has no fuel in." He then shows me a big, red button inside an open panel. Before pointing at a small empty glass vial? The thing itself firmly logged into the machine behind a transparent, protective cover.

"Now come on, you should see what's inside~" Khota then motions with his still-functioning arm as we head to enter the garage. Only to

find...

A body. No, more like half a body. By the upper left corner of the room. On its knees with its ass up, said ass, which was wearing cargo pants, slightly swaying as the rest of the body was for some reason, clipping through the ground?

"This is, indeed something." I respond as I turn to look at Khota.

"Ahh? Did you bring em?" And the butt asks.

"Y, yes.." Khota mumbles as he keeps staring at the talking butt.

"I found the water tank!" The butt exclaims as the rest of the body finally pulls itself back out from the hole it had shoved itself into. Said body belonging to a certain purple-haired sniper.

"Thing is big but empty, judging from the sound it made, guess without the pumps working it can't function." Rika adds as she closes the lid of the hole she was looking into. Then sits with her back by the wall. Next to her and to her right was a big, metallic wardrobe full of, car batteries? Along with a big smooth rectangle box that had thick plastic tubes sticking out of it, one going to the metal wardrobe and the other leading towards a big breaker box that was on the wall to our left, the one that run from us to Rika.

"Huh, so everything is here? I didn't actually check this place since it was corpse free." I mumble as I walk into the garage, walking up to the metallic wardrobe.

"Yea! This place has a very big battery bank! I can only imagine how much energy the solar panels must make!" Khota adds excitedly.

"Well, we can just start the damn thing and find out. It's sunny outside so all the better." Rika chuckles as she gets up. Looking, sweaty, for the lack of a better term.

"Where you not supposed to be digging holes or something?" I ask as I turn to Rika.

"But I'm tiiireeed. I want a break..." Rika dramatically leans on her knees before looking up at me, almost as if she was trying to make puppy eyes by looking at me through her eyelashes.

"So you left the others alone outside?" I ask again.

"Asami is on lookout. Have some faith, she's a cop." Rika adds as she returns to her normal posture.

"But yea, I 'was' going to take a short break. But chubby here needed help figuring out what is what." Rika chuckles as she raises her arms.

"So, what did you find?" I ask as I fold my arms.

"Well this thing here, that has the word 'INVERTER' written on it with big black letters, I think it's the inverter for the solar panels. Also, it's turned off~" Rika chuckles as she throws a light slap on the inverter next to the battery bank.

"You know how solar panels work?" I ask.

"Nope. No idea. I just told you what chubby told me. Also, the big flip switch under it is pointing at 'OFF'." Rika shrugs.

"..." I just kept staring at Rika.

"Aaanyway. The main breaker over here has most, if not all of its stuff turned off." Rika then leaves her spot and walks up to the breaker box on the wall to the left.

"So, if we open up that bad boy, and flip the switches here. We should hypothetically be ready for cristmas~. If nothing is fried that is." Rika adds with a smirk.

"Hmm, well, fuck it. I'll flip the inverter on and hope we don't all blow up." I sigh as I start to walk up to the inverter.

"Ahh! Naier wait!" And Saya quickly runs up next to me.

"What? Need to check something?" I ask as I turn to her. Saya just glances at the inverter, then at me.

"Just uhh, be careful..." She mumbles.

"Awww, your girlfriend is worried~" Rika snickers.

"S, shut up you talking butt!" Saya quickly retorts.

And with that, I turn to the switch again...

(Here goes nothing.)

A loud 'thud', and the switch stops at the 'ON' point.

"No explosions?" I 'ask' as I look at the battery bank.

"Or any sings of li, oh?..." Just as I was about to speak, the inverter's screen comes to life. And...

"What, the hell, is this? I blink as I look at the 'KW' number.

"What's wrong?" Saya quickly comes up to me to look at the inverter.

"Huh? Is it not wor-Oh holy crap!" Khota responds as he also looks at the numbers as well.

"Is something wrong?" Saeko, who was quiet up until now asks as she comes to also look at the numbers as well, tilting her head.

"... Depends. Are we going to power the death star?" I ask as I turn towards Saeko with a chuckle. The girl just blinks at me with a confused expression.

"This thing craves over sixty Kw!" Khota shouts.

"Is that a lot?" Saeko asks back still as confused as ever.

"... A normal house could do with that. Five, ten, fifteen? And right now it says we are using less than one, probably because the main circuit board has most if not all its stuff down." I respond as I fold my arms. Rika just whistles from the back in response.

"So I can leave the Air conditioner open all night now~" The purple-haired sniper chuckles.

"How do you know all that?" Saya then asks as she tilts her head with a small frown.

"Free time and an internet connection." I respond flatly.

"But yea, this place definitely draws more energy than a normal house." I add as I fold my arms.

"The gate, camera system, water pumps." I continue.

"Speaking of pumps. Flip the pump switch." I then point at the breaker.

"Ai, ai captain. Ehehe, I'm all jittery now~" Rika giggles as she flips the switch. And the meter in the inverter goes from half kw to two kw.

"We have movement." I nod as I tap the screen.

"Ohh I got to check this out!" Rika then quickly leaves the garage, and enters the kitchen. By climbing up the window. Or more like she ends up hanging over the window.

"Aww crap! The sink is next to the other window..." Rika grumbles as she keeps hanging over the window.

(Oh look, the talking butt is back.)

She then jumps back down and tries to climb up the next window. While at the same time I open the lid on the floor next to me and look at the water tank.

The cylindrical meter gauge that was embedded into the thick metal blue barrel was sitting firmly at zero. Yet.

"I can hear water running." I speak up as I place my hand on the tank.

"So, it works?" Saya asks.

"It just works." I reply flatly.

"Eeeey! We got water in the taps!" And Rika shouts right after.

"Leave the water to run for a bit! Fill a bucket or something so we don't throw it away!" I add.

"Why would we need to let the water run?" Saeko then asks as she tilts her head.

"Water was probably left in the pipes for who knows how long. And we could use it for mopping the place anyway." I respond as I close the lid and get up, then walk up to the breaker box.

"I've never been this excited to mop floors." Khota chuckles.

"I've never been this excited flipping switches." I respond as I flip the first breaker switch. Then look at the inverter.

"Hmm, something changed, I think?..." I mumble as I look at the breaker box again.

"Let's find what this thing opened." I nod slightly and step back.

"Let's split up, look around the house, flip lights on, see for signs of life. Just stay away from the dojo for now." I add as I turn to look at the group, who quickly nodded and split off.

"And somebody inform Rika!" I shout as I turn to the breaker.

And not a minute later...

"Lower bathroom! Water is running and the lights are open!" A female voice shouts.

"Aight. so, B1" I nod and pull my knife, and carve a square shape next to the breaker box, then carve a B1 on the upper left corner. Then glance at the inverter.

(Bearly any change.)

"Next~" And I flip the next switch...

"Oi! Who opened the dish-washer!" Rika shouts right after.

"Is the fridge working!" I shout as I carve a 'K1' next to the 'B1'

"No, idea!" Rika shouts back. I then turn to look at the inverter.

(Hmm we got an increase, from two to three and a half.)

"Is there anything other than the dishwasher working? If not, close that as well!" I ask again.

"... Everything is closed!" Rika shouts. And I look at the inverter again.

(The same drain, so the fridge must be working.)

"Close the fridge door and leave it! But make sure no fluid is left loose inside first!" I shout. Rika just shouted back an 'Ok'

And so, we kept flipping switches.

The main room and hallway on the first floor were next, that was 'L1'

Then was the second-floor central room and hallways, that was 'H2 + W2'

Then the rooms, each one with its own breaker, from 'R1' with a smaller '2' next to it, all the way to 'R6'

Then the second room bathroom, which was 'B2'

Then the third floor, which was the whole floor, with a plain '3'

That, was essentially two lines of breakers.

After that, was the third line with five more breakers.

The first turned out not to work, as the switch was loose, falling back down when I flipped it.

The second reacted, but we could not find what it was.

The third, opened the lights in the courtyard, so I carved an 'O+'

The forth opened the warehouse lights, and got the designation 'W+'

And the fifth, also opened something, but we could not find what it was either.

-About half an hour later-

"So one broken, two mystery switches." Saya nods.

"Dojo, cameras, and gate?" Rika asks.

"Most probably. The broken one must be the gate, since it still won't function via console. Cameras, we need to charge the laptop and check. Dojo, we'll find out soon enough." I nod back.

"I'll go plug in the laptop then." Saya adds as she turns to leave.

"Just don't make 'Rika the bark bark' while I'm not looking ah? We already got one dog." I respond as chuckle, Saya turning to glare-pout at me, along with a deep frown.

"Bark bark?" Rika asks as she tilts her head.

"What does Zeke have to do with anything?" Khota then asks with an equally confused expression.

"Zeke has to do with everything" I chuckle as I fold my arm, smirking slightly at Saya.

"Ohh, I'll show you bark bark..." Saya mumbles as she starts to walk away with loud footsteps.

(... Something tells me Naier Takagi is in mortal danger now...)

"... I can bearly believe it, we actually got electricity..." Khota whispers as he stares at the inverter. Now sitting firmly at ten KW.

"Yea, and we'll need a new set of rules about it..." I sigh as I turn to look towards the house.

"Rules?" Rika asks back.

"Yea. Do you know easy it is to see light pollution at night? Especially when the only thing having electricity other than us is the airport?" I nod as I turn at Rika.

"Ahh, yea makes sense. Guess no nighttime sightseeing with the lights open. Unless we want to become a beacon." Rika nods back.

"Exactly. If we are to use lights at night, we need to make sure that light won't seep out, like shutters that block it completely." I continue.

"Let us add that to the list of things we need then." Saeko adds as she nods.

"Along with wooden boards, nails, plaster, and the ability to build house walls." I chuckle as I point toward the first floor of the house.

"We really ought to make a list." Rika scratches the back of her head as she sighs.

"We will, once we deal with everything here. More importantly, we need to find out if the second pump by the river has its own tank somewhere, or if it connects to this one." I respond as I fold my arms.

"Hmm, yea. Good point." Rika nods slightly as she turns to leave.

"Well, I should go back to digging holes, the faster we're done, the faster I can moth around the lights~" She adds with a chuckle as she waves goodbye with her back turned to me.

"I should go too. Help Asami guard." Khota adds with a nod as he also turns to leave.

"We should get done with the dojo as well." I add as I also turn to walk.

"Just the two of us? Saya went to fetch the laptop remember?" Saeko then speaks up.

"Not that I would mind~" She adds as she slides up next to me.

"Uhh, right. If we leave and she returns to find nobody she'll probably flip because we dumped her. The laptop was at the Humvee. Which doing runs back and forth with the corpse clearing. I don't see it here so, outside?" I tilt my head as I fold my arms.

"We lose nothing to check outside." Saeko then nods. And so, both of us started heading towards the front gate.

Finding the Humvee to indeed be parked next to a relatively shallow, but quite wide hole. Rika in it with a shovel we found in the warehouse. Shizuka was in the Humvee's driver seat. Alice talking

with Khota and Asami a bit further away. Saya herself was with the laptop in her arms and was heading towards us. Oh yea, and a mass of 'dead' corpses next to the hole.

"Huh, why are you two here?" She asks the moment she walked up to us.

"I'm overlooking the slave labor." I respond with a flat tone. Saya just blinks at me, before glancing behind her.

"Yea I'm just here to tell you that we're going to the dojo, since you'll have to go and plug that laptop in the room." I then add as I point at the laptop she was hugging.

Saya glances at Saeko, then at me.

"You should not go in unprepared. Wait for me. Or better yet. Come with me so we can see if the cameras work." Saya narrows her eyes before shaking her head.

"Uhh, yea we could do that too." I tilt my head as I fold my arms.

"Fine by me." Saeko nods with a small shrug.

And with that, the three of us headed towards the house.

(Back out the stone age we go.)

And thank you to all my supporters. All four of em xD

The old fashioned way

Boomer14: The song may be worse, but kiting the whole map with twin spear blast dashing has never been better xD. Or you know, being to able to aim where my damn airstrike will fall. Or sprint and dodge xD. All in all, now we're all sitting on our thumbs for EDF-6

rharper909: Thank you.

The Commissar 13, OechsnerC, guest that loves it, CarLost, new x king x death x: Just in case it gets cloudy and they were in the middle of a final boss xD

Otagema : Damn, so I've been pissing off alpha chads for three years xD?

Guest that wants more Saeko: The reason Saeko gets less screen time now is simply because the things happenings are better handled by Saya.

Krieger Techpreist: Last time I checked, Tourge was the C.E.O of the Torgue corporation, and a gatekeeper that wants you to blow up the ocean.

Alphaaa'N'Omegas: And now, let's all sit on our thumbs and wait for E.D.F 6 to get a global, pc release so the E.D.F can deploy once again.

websplorer : I have not really checked days in exact, but it must be weeks from all the time the character slept. And based on what I read a koi can survive up to two weeks without food if kept under preferable conditions, which include changing water by about 20% each week. Now the question, is how many days has it been since the estate got overrun. Well, take it on the long side for that. Plus, other reasons. You're asking stuff that the cast is going to look into on this chapter xD...

Spielar : Ya ain't baiting me ma dude. Not even if you pay me xD

"There." Saya points at the laptop's screen, towards a body on the floor of the dojo.

"Hmm, yea. That makes nine." I nod...

It has been some time since me and the girls sat in front of the computer's screen. Thankfully, I was able to link the cameras to the laptop, since I found the initial software for the cameras inside a usb stick inside the desk we used as a barricade.

Now, what we found.

First of all, all of the outer rooms had cameras, which were the two garages, warehouse and dojo. The house itself had cameras around it, and there were also cameras around the outer wall. Even better, all of em were functional.

Now the other thing, on the wall behind the estate, from the opposite side we arrived from, was a tank. One that was very similar to the water tank in the garage, with a long, thick pipe going downwards, towards, somewhere. Big chance that was the storage tank for the secondary river pump. Sadly we found it to be nonfunctional, plus it did not seem to connect to the house in any way. Meaning that we either had to pass a very long hose over the wall, or exit the wall to get water from it, if we ever managed to activate it. Though on the trip to check it I managed to restock on ammo from the humvee, so that was something I guess.

And finally, what we have been doing now was checking the dojo for surviving corpses.

"Hmm, well we know we got some left in there, better get going." I nod as I start to get off the bed I and the girls were sitting on.

"Agreed." Saeko nods.

"Let's get this over with then. So we can finally call this place safe." Saya adds right after as she also starts to get up.

"Ah, Saya, I'd like you to stay on the cameras. We got the radios. Keep an eye on us in case something crawls behind our back." I raise my hand towards the Pikette as I turn to her.

"Huh? Why do I have to stay behind again?" Saya just frowns at me as she voices her displeasure.

"Because you've been chosen as the designated coms operative." I reply flatly as I fold my arms. Saya just lets out a loud groan as she sits on the bed again.

(For all the whining, she does listen to what I say.)

"You two better not do anything weird." She mumbles as she turns to the laptop.

"Weird? Like?" Saeko asks as she finally gets up and starts to walk towards the door.

"Like weird." Saya replies flatly as she narrows her eyes at Saeko.

"I wonder what that weird would be..." Saeko smirks slightly as she opens the door to the hallway.

"Come on Naier, we should go. And, make sure you do nothing weird to me~." She then adds as she turns to glance at me, the tone of her voice making it obvious that she was meaning, the opposite of what she's saying.

"Hey!" Saya just shouts back at her as she frowns. Causing Saeko to leave the room with a small giggle.

"I'm going to be watching you buster, you better not try anything funny." And then the moody pinkette turns to frown at me.

"Saya, for crying out loud. In a dojo surrounded by blood, gore and corpses? Even I have some standards." I lower my head as I shake it.

"Humf, so what you're saying is that if that place was in better condition you 'would' do something." Saya just keeps frowning at me as she folds her arms under her chest.

"If that place was in better condition you wouldn't be here looking at a camera Saya. Meaning, that there's a big chance that if something weird 'did' happen, I'd probably happen to you too." I smirk slightly as I lean towards the pinkette, who just blushes and turns to look at the screen.

"A, as if I'd let you." Saya mumbles as she starts tapping the arrows on the keyboard to switch around the cameras.

"Hmm? So you'd rather watch? Damn Saya you kinky. Also, you already sort of did let me, and Saeko..." I chuckle as I turn to exit the room. Saya shouting a flustered 'Idiot' as I exited the room.

"And you told me not to tease her too much." Saeko, who was waiting outside in the hallway with her arms folded, speaks up the moment I close the door.

"You know the whole thing ended like that because you 'did' tease her right?" I respond as I also fold my arms, then start to walk.

"Hmm? I did?" Saeko just smirks slightly as she turns to walk down the hallway with me.

After going down to the first floor with Saeko. I find Shizuka, with a mop. Scrubbing the floor as she hummed some tune under her breath.

Looking past her I could see that most, if not all the corpses in the front courtyard had disappeared.

"Done with the driving?" I ask as I walk up to Shizuka, who turns to look at me while she was still slightly bent over.

"M'hm. Rika told me to start cleaning because I'm better at it compared to digging." Shizuka continues as she keeps scrubbing.

"Huh, how can somebody be better at cleaning than digging? Did you toss a dirt pile at somebody's face or something?" I ask with a small chuckle as I fold my arms.

"I, it wasn't my fault! How could I know Asami was standing behind me!" Shizuka puffs her cheeks as she tries to glare at me.

(Wait. So you did toss dirt at somebody's face...)

I blink a couple of times as I keep staring at Shizuka.

"Good luck with the cleaning. Remember, moral hangs on you. Nobody wants to live in a house full of gunk and bloodstains." I reply as I make her a thumbs up.

"Yes!" Shizuka nods energetically as she starts to scrub even harder.

"Just, don't grind a hole in the floor, nobody wants to live in a house full of holes." I chuckle as I wave her goodbye and turn to walk towards the garden behind us.

"I won't!" Shizuka shouts back as energetically.

"Bringing them along was a good idea. I do not think we could have managed all this so fast just by our selves" Saeko then turns to glance behind her as she starts to speak.

"Yea, I just hope that nobody gets too comfy to the point that they forget that a few kilometers from us, all hell is breaking loose." I answer as I also glance behind me.

"We will just have to remind them if they do." Saeko just nods at me.

" *Are you there yet? I don't see you.* " And my radio speaks up.

"We'll be there in five." I answer as I turn to look at the dojo.

"Any changes inside?" I ask right after.

" *Uhh, no. Just remember that there are three corpses squatting down behind the front door.* " Saya responds.

"No worries. I'll just kick in the door again." I answer with a slight shrug.

" *Boys and their door-kicking habits...* " Saya just sighs. I could honestly almost see her shaking her head in a disapproving manner.

"You're just not in my boots." I respond.

" *You mean shoes.* " Saya corrects me.

"No, I did mean boots. These things have metal plates in, they're just asking to be used to kick stuff in." I answer. Saya stayed quiet for a few seconds, probably processing what I just told her, before just calling me an idiot. Again.

And with that, me and my boots reached the front of the dojo. Saeko once again readying her blade behind me.

"Alright, I open the door and we back off. Let them come out." I whisper as I grab the hose, Saeko calmly nods at me.

And with a quick fling, I undo the hose, and, kick the doors in. The right door this time stopped mid-way as it found something to slam against. The left one opened completely, and at the same time one of the corpses charged out.

Not fast enough to get me though, as I quickly jumped out of the way, falling to my side as the corpse charged past me, and towards Saeko, who was more than ready for it. Proven by the fact that the

corpse then lost both arms, before getting a stomp on its chest, falling flat on its back.

By the time I got up and drew my blade, the second of the three corpses was creeping outside, 'looking' towards Saeko. At a range that let me just take a step in and stab it at the side of its head.

The third one, I found was still flailing sluggishly on the ground behind the door. So after I entered the Dojo, I pressed my boot against its chest, the corpse grabbing my leg with both arms as it tried to reach it with its mouth. Though the only thing it got, was a bullet to the head from my handgun.

" *Got the other two as well?* " Saya then asks.

"Nah, we gave them a light scolding and send them on their merry way." I answer as I laugh through my nose, kicking the now limb arms off my leg.

" *Ha-ha.* " Saya lets out an obviously fake, monotone laugh.

" *There should be three more by the changing room on the far right, and two more inside the showers after the changing room . Along with the ones we saw in the main room through the camera.*" Saya then continues.

I nod, and turn to walk to the right, staying a good ten meters away from the 'battlefield'.

The remaining corpses we had to shoot were now pretty easy to spot, since we knew their location from the cameras.

"Want to try?" I ask as I turn to Saeko, and extend my handgun to her as I held it from the barrel.

Saeko glanced at the gun, then towards the deeper part of the dojo. I also think she glanced towards where the camera should be at?

She then nodded with a smile as she took the gun and aimed at the nearest corpse that was trying to be a fish on the floor.

"Would you mind showing me what I need to do again?" Saeko asks as she turns to me, gun still pointing towards the corpse. I nod and walk up to her.

"Where should I aim?" She then asks as she tries to aim the gun.

"Straight and to the left, there's one in plain view." I respond as I point at the nearest corpse that was crawling toward us on the floor.

Saeko nods and closes one eye, taking a few seconds to look at the gun, then the corpse, then at her legs as she fixed her posture.

"Hmmf, you better not start acting like you do not know how to use a gun. I saw you shoot when we were with Rika." Saya then speaks up through the radio.

"Ohh? And why would I do that?" Saeko asks back as she pulls the trigger. Yet the shot, missed the target for a meter or so.

Saeko shakes her head and aims again. While I aimed my own rifle at a different corpse.

"By the way. How come we have cameras in 'this' bathroom." I ask myself as I take a shot at the furthest corpse I could see.

"There are actual weapons in this building. And the showers have windows. Would you rather be caught naked, or dead? Besides, the only female that ever used the dojo was me. And the only one that used the cameras was my father. " Saeko calmly responds as she keeps aiming before firing a shot, this time getting the corpse at the shoulder.

"I see." I nod slightly as I change target.

(You know, I never heard her say anything about her mother. And considering her attitude, something tells me her father was

responsible for her since she was a kid. But this ain't the time for this.)

I shake my head slightly as focus back on shooting.

And so after a few minutes, and a couple of shots later...

" I think that would be all of them. " Saya says through the radio.

"So changing rooms next?" I ask. Saya answered with a 'mhm'...

I nod slightly and turn to walk, only for Saeko to stop me by softly taking my hand. The moment I turn around, she extends the handgun back to me.

"Keep it, until we're done." I respond as I glance at the gun.

"Did you forget that I actually have a gun too?" She asks with a giggle as she 'shows' me her hip. Her handgun was still strapped to it.

"Right." I glance at the gun for a few seconds before taking the gun off her hands and holstering it.

"These should be the last corpses left in the estate." She then adds as we start to walk towards the door that led to changing rooms.

"Fucking hope so. Don't need midnight jumpscares in my life." I respond with a slight sigh.

"Do not worry, I will make sure nothing, jumpscares you while you sleep~" Saeko leans slightly towards me with a meaningful smile as she whispered.

"Not if you end up more exhausted than me." I reply flatly. Saeko just lets out an 'Ohhh?'

And so, by staying by the wall to our right, we reach the door that led to the changing rooms.

Said door wide open, and upon closing in, I could see two rows of lockers and small bench-like seats that run along the distance of the room. Two of the four corpses visible from here, dressed as you'd expect somebody to dress inside a changing room, one on each side of the bench kneeling down next to the remains of a poor sod that was split in half on the bench between the two corpses.

To my left, behind the lockers, I could partly see another set of benches and lockers, following the same layout as the one in front of me. The third corpse was partly visible as it was chilling there by itself, or more like, it was trying to phase through the locker towards my direction with how it kept trying to walk into it.

Needless to say, there was a lot of smeared blood on the floor. What made it worse, was that the insides of the changing room were made of waterproof tiles.

(Hmm? The one over there is trying to move towards us, but these two just ignored the gunshots. Is that guy 'that' tasty?)

"The place is probably too slippery to jump about. I'll take them out with a gun from here. Lest we end up slipping on a puddle of blood and meeting the wrong end of a mouth." I whisper as I raise my hand, then lift my scar-H, Saeko just stood behind me in silence.

So, after taking aim, I fire at the first corpse, sending it tumbling down after a clean headshot, its friend, which still did not react, followed soon after.

" *The third one stopped banging against the locker and is moving towards you .*" Saya then speaks up.

I nod and turn to aim at the gap between the lockers to my left and the lockers on the far end.

And sure enough, the lone corpse soon walked out, equally undressed as the other two.

"Check the ones in the showers" I respond to the radio, then take the shot.

" *Umm, I see. four inside now..* ." Saya mumbles.

"Wasn't it two?" I ask back.

" *The camera can't see inside the showers, just the hallway between them. Maybe they were hiding inside. Two are near the end of the hallway, the other two are at about the center* ." Saya answers.

"Roger." I nod and walk deeper into the changing rooms. Carefully stepping on the puddles so I don't end up upside down.

The entrance to the showers was on the wall ahead of me, behind the locker set to my left.

(If I remember right, after the door frame towards the showers there was a small corridor that went left, then turned right, where the hallway with the showers started. So if two corpses were by the end of the long hallway, they will probably get the jump on me if I enter through the doorless frame now.)

With another small nod, I walk to the end of the bench, where the door frame became visible, then sat on the bench, aiming at the doorframe.

"Naier?" Saeko, who was still behind me speaks up. I just raise my finger before grabbing my gun again.

And sure enough, a corpse crawled out the dark corridor seconds after, only to get greeted by a bullet. Followed then by a second corpse, that got the same treatment.

"Where are the other two?" I then ask at my radio.

"... *Five...* " Saya mumbles.

"Really?" I ask with a chuckle.

" *N,not my fault these perverts hid inside the damn showers!* " Saya quickly protests with a whiny tone.

"So, where are they?" I ask.

"*Nearest just disappeared from the camera...* " Saya answers.

"Got it." I nod, and lower my gun slightly.

"I'd go inside and go to them. But, ehh. Let them come, I'm too lazy to get up." I sigh as I aim again.

"Hmm, are you getting too comfy Naier?" Saeko chuckles from behind me.

"Guilty as charged." I chuckle back as I felt Saeko sitting behind me and putting her hands on my shoulders.

It actually took a few minutes before the first corpse appeared through the doorframe, then the second, third, fourth, and fifth. All, getting a one-way ticket to get-the-fuck-out-my-shower land.

... And after a few minutes of seated shooting...

"... We done?" I ask as I tilt my head.

" *I think so. I don't see anything inside.* " Saya responds.

"Well, let's check it." I nod slightly as I get up. Keeping the gun aimed at the corpses I just sent to showerless land.

After walking up to them and throwing a quick kick, I step past them, into the corridor, and then the main hallway. The sound of showers running now being audible.

"Fuck this is slippery..." I groan under my breath as I check the floor with my foot.

"Carefull here. With the water back on the showers seem to have restarted. The floor is probably going to be as slippery if not more." I glance at Saeko before starting to walk again. Checking each shower individually.

And a few seconds later...

"Clear. Now we need to close the showers. Water be wasting like it's nobody's business." I add as I leave my scar-H, handgun, and clips next to the wall on the wall next to me, since I was at the end of the hallway. Saeko nods, and hands me her sword, handgun, and clips.

I then turn to look at the shower, shrug slightly, and plainly walk into it and shut it off.

"Good thing it's hot outside." I chuckle as I walk back out and check how wet my clothes got.

"Indeed..." Saeko responds with a giggle. Turning to look at her, I found her shirt was starting to become partly see-through and her hair looked a bit, wet.

(Black has better visibility compared to purple. Uhh, focus Naier. Close tha wata hose Naier.)

I shake my head and head to the next open shower, I think, I heard Saeko giggling from my side?...

It must have taken us less than a minute to close all the showers. And, call me suspicious...

But why in the end Saeko's clothes looked completely drenched when I was bearly wet?...

"Is something wrong?" Saeko, seeing me staring, asks with an almost innocent tone as she tilts her head.

"We were supposed to close the showers, not, take a shower..." I blink at her as I keep staring.

"This? Oh, I did as fast as I could..." Saeko responds flatly as she pinches her shirt with both hands a little over her chest, then tugs it a couple of times as she turns to look at her shirt...

I, could actually hear a low-toned, angry grown coming from my radio as Saeko, uhh, bounced...

(Press X to doubt...)

"But I guess you are right. It would be rather unbecoming of me to walk outside with my clothes like this..." She adds as she lifts her head to look at me...

"Hmm, I think I actually had one of my training outfits here, in the changing rooms." She adds as she folds her arms.

"Very well. Give me a sec." I nod and walk back to the end of the hallway, picking up our stuff. Then walk back to Saeko and hand her her sword.

"I'll go keep guard on the door, since this place is safe." I add as I start to walk, putting my stuff back in their respective place.

Yet the moment we walked out of the shower, I turn to look at the corpses.

"Actually..." I grab one of the corpses and start to drag it out. Saeko looked at me before doing the same.

"You want to clear the changing rooms now?" Saeko asks right after.

"I'd rather not risk having you change next to probably dead corpses." I answer as I leave the first corpse in the main dojo room, then turn to look at Saeko.

Saeko did not respond, she just stared at me for a few seconds.

"Saeko?" I ask as I tilt my head.

"It, feels really nice to have somebody care about you. And, that you are still acting like a gentleman towards me. Some would think that staying inside to ogle at me as I change would be fine." She lets out a small giggle before smiling at me...

I just chuckle as I ruffle her hair, then walk back into the changing rooms to grab the rest of the corpses...

- A few minutes later-

I was with my back next to the door, looking at the dead mini horde inside the dojo.

"No point, the car can't come in here anyway. So no point making a hole in the wall." I respond as I lower my radio.

"True, so we have to clear this place the slow way..." Saya mumbles.

"Yea, but we'll all work on it, so it will be over quicker than you think." I nod as I kick away from the wall, and head towards one of the swords that was sticking out of the ground. Part of the blade jammed inside the body of a headless body.

I then grab the blade, and pull it.

"Hmm, quality seems better compared to the one I use, but being left like this might have degraded it..." I mumble as I take a weak swing with one arm.

"Heh, I could take six of them and go all Masamune Date. Though I don't think that's an 'accurate' representation of him. Unless he went around using katanas like wolverine claws." I chuckle as I back off and drop the sword, then walk up towards one that was plainly tossed to the floor, seemingly being spared getting jammed inside a moist sack of flesh...

I kneel down and pick up the blade...

"Naier?" And a female voice speaks up from behind me, turning around I find Saeko in a kendo outfit, white top and dark blue bottom. She was not wearing any sort of armor though, at least on over the baggy-looking clothes. She also had her hair in a ponytail.

She was also looking around, was I really that hard to spot? My sneak was high, but I don't think it was at a hundred points yet. Granted though the place was not very bright and the ground looked almost black from all the smeared blood, and I was wearing black.

"Yea?" I ask as I get up, keeping the sword in my hand. Saeko turns to me and shows me her wet clothes.

"We should leave this somewhere to dry." She adds as she starts to walk towards the exit. I just nod and start to follow her...

Once outside, I take a deep breath.

"And we are. Done." I let my shoulders drop as I turn to look at the small ponds in the distance to my right.

"Did we check if there are any corpses inside the ponds? The water seems a bit, 'too' murky, even after not being taken care of for a week or two. Would explain why everything is dead too if the water quality got degraded and was left unchanged." I ask as I tilt my head.

"I do not know. But these ponds are connected at the bottom. So if a couple of corpses fell into one, all the other ponds would get dirty too." Saeko shakes her head before turning to look at the ponds.

"Anyway to drain the ponds?" I ask again.

"The old-fashioned way." Saeko answers.

"We need to pass a cable to hang our wet clothes..." She adds as she turns to me.

"Or use the dryer. Think I saw one on the second floor." I shrug.

"Oh, right. We, have electricity..." Saeko blinks at me in surprise.

"And speaking about it. We forgot to check the dojo, if the lights work..." I scratch the back of my head as I turn to look behind me.

"There should be a switch for the lights right next to the entrance." Saeko responds as she points behind me, at the open dojo doors.

I nod, and enter the dojo again, finding said switch next to the door to my right.

And, upon flipping the switch, the whole place lit up.

(Well, that was retarded. Would have been easier clearing this place if the lights were on...

"Well, it just works." I nod as I give the place a final glance before walking out, after closing the lights again.

"Also, if you do not mind me asking, why are you carrying this around?" Saeko then asks as she points at my hand. The Katana I picked off the ground still in my hand.

"Ah, I want you to check the swords in there. Most of them are probably ruined. But some might be usable." I respond as I look at the blade.

"Hmm, not a bad idea. We could always do with more weapons to stock up with." Saeko nods at me as she looks at the blade again.

"Let us gather them when we start to clean the Dojo. I will check which are salvageable." She adds as she lifts her head to look at me.

"So, what is our next step?" She asks she tilts her head.

"Lock the dojo again, just to be sure that nothing will come back to life when we are not looking. And, hmm..." I fold my arms as I look around the courtyard, then lower my head.

"We could check the ponds, see if any of them got any corpse bits in, and dry them out if need be. We'll also bury the Koi. Don't think eating them is a smart idea, we don't know how long they have been dead. And leaving them to rot is unhealthy." I lift my head to find Saeko was gone. Turning to glance behind me, I find her tying the hose.

"You got any idea how we will drain it?" She asks as she finishes tying the door.

"We'll need a long hose, think I saw one in the warehouse next to the shovel, and find a spot to connect it with the drain line of the house. I don't know how this house handles drain and sewer lines. But there's no way for a truck to come here if it has a designated septic tank. I did read something about drain fields on the internet, but uhh. I dono, you rich people and your villas must use some sort of black magic for that stuff..." I shrug slightly as I keep looking at Saeko.

"I would not know. Though I 'do' know that I have never seen trucks around here." Saeko nods at me.

"Well, one step at a time. We're not swimming in backflow, so it must be taken care of in some way. This place was built to be self-sustainable off-grid after all." I shake my head before I start to walk.

"I do hope so..." Saeko flatly responds.

"Saya, we're finished. Probably." I then bring my radio up.

" *Probably?* " Saya asks back.

"Well, I did not poke every single corpse to see if they'll start flopping." I add as I glance behind me, at the now locked door.

"When we'll clear this place we'll have to take some extra precautions. Just in any case. Anyway, we will head to the front, and see if they need any help." I continue.

" Ok, I'll stay on the cameras for now make sure nothing appears when we are not looking." Saya answers.

"Aight, just make sure you have sims in window mode so you can look at both windows ah?" I chuckle as I lower the radio.

" D, don't be stupid! " Saya shouts back with a flustered tone.

"Should we not inform my father? Now that electricity is on?" Saeko then asks.

"Ahh, right. Almost forgot, let's go fetch Khota and head to the third floor." I nod as I pick up the pace.

-15 minutes later-

We were all at the third floor, all of us as the rest of the group, by their words, this was too important to be digging holes.

"So info for locations for a library, a pharmacy, a flower store, a nearby gas station, an electronics store, and a store that has building supplies." I look through the paper the rest of the group noted on while Khota was fiddling with the big radio on the desk, the map on the table next to him with the coordinates he needed.

"Yea, if we could mark the stores on the map and know if any roads are blocked off beforehand. We could draw a path to drive through." Saya nods as she keeps looking at the map while leaning next to Khota.

"Well, I can tell you that around this perimeter..." Rika runs her finger around the edge of the map, circling a rather big location around the airport.

"Have been searched and picked clean. Books, foodstuff, weapons, gas. You won't find jack squat." She continues.

"Also I expect a person like Souichiro to know locations about the stuff we need, and about road conditions for making patrol routes, or

buildings that have materials but have yet to be searched." She adds as she backs off.

"Ah! Got it!" And Khota speaks up as he leans back, almost hitting his head on Saya's shoulder.

"Hey watch it!" Saya hisses back as she leans away.

"Eh? Wa! When did you get this close to me?!" Khota turns towards Saya, only to lean away with a slight blush.

(Khota my boy, don't tread there...)

"Ok, wait a sec, based on what Saeko's father told me. This should be a private line." I nod as I lean next to Khota, between him and Saya. Then look at the time on my watch.

"Saeko, any chance we know when he will be alone? So we don't speak up when he is in a meeting with, I dono, captain grabby fingers or something?" I ask as I turn to her.

"He usually had his tea time at five." Saeko responds.

(Heh, tea time. More like volcano time...)

"And it's. Twelve..." I turn to the standing mic, then to Khota.

"Ok, everybody stay silent for a few. Khota, press the talk button." I bring my hand next to the mic as I speak.

"Uhhh. Ok." Khota nods, and presses a button on the radio, then makes me thumbs up.

I nod, and grab the mic, then drag my fingers on it, essentially trying to claw at it. I then turn to Khota, and make a slit throat motion. With a nod, he presses the button on the radio again.

"Uhhh, what exactly did you do?" Shizuka asks as she keeps staring at the radio.

"The connection is private to a different radio I suspect. He must have it on him, since he expects us so..."

"Careful as ever I see. I am by myself, you can speak." And a gruff voice speaks up through the ham radio.

"Can never be too careful. So, we have taken the premise. The house has sustained some damage but seems to be superficial. The wiring is intact, same as plumbing. Outer walls are also intact, the front gate's fuse is busted, and we have yet to find a new one. Cameras function. First floor walls are mostly busted." I answer.

"Did you check if you can go online? Also, there should be spare fuse's in the warehouse" Saeko's father asks.

"Uhh, no. Aren't landline bus.. wait, there were no landlines here in the first place..." I stop mid-sentence as I realize that...

"Yes, we used a satellite connection there." Saeko's father responds.

"So as long as there are still parts of the web still running, like servers and mainframes for sites. We can log into them..." I whisper.

"But what about the operations center of the provider? The satellites do not connect straight to the web, they need to first connect to the provider's operation center. If that is in Japan and it has been hit by the E.M.P..." Khota mumbles.

"Khota, go check the laptop, we got nothing to lose. Also, this button closes the radio?" I quickly turn to look at our chubby guy as I show a red button that was lit up from the inside on the radio's main body, Khota nods as quickly as he gets up and turns to exit the room.

"Ahh! Wait!" And Saya quickly followed behind.

(Did she forget Naier Takagi on the front screen?...) I chuckle under my breath as I turn to the mic.

"I guess there's no point asking you about certain locations we need to know of, if we will be able to get on the net." I then turn to look at the map.

"Hmm? Locations? Care to be more specific?" Saeko's father asks back.

"A library, a pharmacy, a flower store, a nearby gas station, an electronics store for house consumables like light bulbs and the such, and a store that has building supplies for houses, boards, nails, plaster. Also, the state of the roads, places that are known to be untraversable." I nod at myself as I speak.

"I should think that Souichiro could help you with that. I shall ask him to relay that information to you. In the meantime, check if you can actually get online and get that information yourself." The radio responds.

"And for now, keep a person on the radio constantly, for I do not know when I might respond. I am going offline. Good job so far Naier. I am glad to see that my daughter's faith was not misplaced in you." And, the radio goes silent.

"Great..." I back off, and turn to exit the room.

"We'll leave Khota on the radio since he knows how to use it. Let's go on with what we were doing. I'll go check what's going on with the computer." I motion with my head as I turn to look inside the radio room, the rest of the group still inside, staring at me...

And so, we all head down to the second floor, and to the room where Saya and Khota were at. The latter sitting on a chair at the right side of the room with the laptop on his lap, taping away at the keyboard...

(... You think we're going to be that lucky?...)

"Tell me we can look up mashed potato recipes." I speak up as I stop next to him, then lean to see at the screen. Yet all I saw was what I

expected, a desert, and a dinosaur.

"It does not flat out kick us, it shows that we got a connection, but with no internet." Khota sighs with a dejected tone.

"So we connect to the satellite..." I fold my arms as I keep looking at the laptop.

"But as I said, if the network center of our provider is propably down. There's not much we can do on that. Unless somebody restarts and maintains it. In other words, forget it." Khota closed the laptop's lid and turns to look at me.

"We have to do things the old-fashioned way after all" I nod slightly and take a deep breath.

"Go to the radio. Saeko's father said he will come back to us with the info we asked." I then take my radio and give it to him, Saya's eyes following the exchange in silence.

"Inform us once we got any news." I continue before I turn to leave.

"So, let's go back to digging holes. We still got a house to clean people." I clap a couple of times as I exit the room. Since the rest, had once again all followed me here.

"Aww, so no kitty cat videos?" Rika 'pouts' as she starts to follow me.

"Let's not get greedy now. We still have it much better than, well, ninety-nine percent of Japan. Not logging into your account to post selfies ain't gonna kill ya" I chuckle as I start going down the stairs.

"But my poor fans! They need me!" Rika responds as she dramatically puts her outer palm on her forehead. Shizuka looked, actually worried as she stared at her friend...

(Though, I'm not going to lie. For a minute there, I really believed it my self.)

You know what this corner is, don't you? The people that take an extra step to help, they get thanks! So a thank you to my supporter's xD

Outing pt1

CarLost : There 'are' a few chapters left xD

Guest that loves it, OechsnerC, Jose Elias680, Bb34: Thank you

Tonyorobsky, The Commissar 13 : Yes

SabreKai: No rest for the wicked xD. The only thing he will be jumping is fences, for now.

Krieger Techpreist: Understandable, but the real question is. Did he ask the Emperor for a high-five before doing an air guitar solo after signing the contract?

harper909: Well, it is ending soon, and I don't intend to throw everything down the drain xD

Sinfel: Yes.

Bondarant : See above.

ThatDevilSlayer: See above.

El joven Sasuke: Story updates don't just happen xD. Somebody's gotta write em. And I essentially got no time to write any more. You can thank the handful of peeps that actually support me with more than words that I still actually post anything atm xD.

Alphaaa'N'Omeegas: Yea I accidentally spoiled some of the game to myself months ago xD. And yea, sadly the game seems to be nowhere near a pc global release

-Click-

And with the push of a button, the big gate next to me starts to close.

"And that's that." I nod to myself as I turn to look behind me towards the garage with the solar bank and breaker switches. Khota standing in front of said breaker switches, staring at me.

I make a thumbs up, and turn to run out of the building as the gates closed shut behind me.

Outside, the Humvee was parked a few meters away from me, while a low-high fire blazed from the corpse-filled hole the rest of the group had dug.

Walking up to the car, I find Rika in the driver seat, Saya in the passenger, and Saeko in the back seat. The car was almost empty, excluding a medium-sized backpack between Saeko's legs, the backpack's top half open, revealing that it was filled with clips and ammo.

As I start to open the door, the gate behind me begins to open again. Asami walking out of the estate, dragging a chair behind her.

"Good luck!" She shouts as she waves at us, then keeps moving towards the 'pire'

"Should have expected the house would need repairs. Or that it would be missing stuff. So much about kicking my feet up." I sighed under my breath as I enter the car. Sitting next to Saeko, who then slid to the center of the back seats.

"Aww, you don't want to go on a date with us? But we were so excited ~" Rika mumbles as she turns to look at me with a fake sad frown.

"It's returning to the town that I'm not excited about. Not the company I'll have." I respond flatly.

"Smoooooth~" Rika chuckles as she turns to look ahead again.

"Will you two hobos take this a bit more seriously? Jeez..." Saya groans as she keeps looking at the map, a small smile on her lips despite her whining.

"Have you set out a path?" I ask as I lean toward the two front seats to look at the map.

Several locations circled out with a red marker, a line connecting the circles into what looked a lot like the overview of a race track with how many twists and turns it had. Several 'X' marks around several streets marked on the map as well.

"Of course I have, what did you think I was doing? Wasting my time?" Saya scoffs.

"Low key the pinkette was trying so hard to make sure you were pleased with her~" Rika chuckles right after.

"N, no I wasn't!" Saya quickly blurts out.

"Saya doesn't give a single fig about me." I shrug as I lean back against my seat.

"I didn't say that!" Saya as quickly yelps as she turns to glare at me.

"Do not worry Naier. You are still the most important person to me." Saeko flatly adds as she leans her shoulder on me, throwing a side glance at the now fuming pinkette...

"Ekhem. We should. Get going..." I 'clear' my throat, then point towards the road ahead through the front windshield.

"Humff. Idiots." Saya narrows her eyes slightly as she returns to her normal posture, then turns to look at the map.

And, as the car starts to move...

"Where are we going first?" I ask as I lean toward Saya. Who turns to glance at me before looking back at the map.

"Here." She points at a circle on the map. A circle that was actually, much further away compared to if we took the 'reverse' track.

"Why not this?" I ask as I point at the closest circle.

"This is the shop with building supplies from what Khota told me. I suspect it will have a lot of big things we will need to haul. Better to go there last. So we don't have to carry around planks and barrels." Saya just shakes her head.

"... Good point. What's the first one?" I ask I sit back in my seat.

"Pharmacy. Then we will go to the public library, after that there is a gas station between the library and a flower store, after that the electronics store, and finally, the building supplies." Saya runs her finger around the map as she responds, then turns to look at me.

"Shame we can't get to the electronics store first, we could use a GPS." I fold my arms, then nod.

"Yes, but sadly the store is not exactly near for us to drive back and forth just for it." Saya glances at the map before nodding as well.

"Hey, what's the worse that can happen? We get lost and get eaten alive~" Rika chuckles.

"Ha-ha. No thanks. "Saya scoffs as she turns to Rika.

"But of course. It's another type of eating you'll probably prefer to get~" Rika smirks slightly, as she glanced at me through the main mirror...

"Huh?..." Saya just tilts her head questionably...

"Rika. Focus on the damn road..." I sigh as I fold my arms.

"Ehehe, I'm not saying, I'm just saying~" Rika just chuckles as she shrugs. Meanwhile, Saya was still staring at Rika with a suspicious frown...

With a slight sigh, I turn to look at the now empty trunk.

"Why have we got only a single ammo bag?" I ask as I tilt my head, glancing at the bag at the footrest next to Saeko.

In response, a metallic thud came from Rika's side.

"We don't. Got the second one with ammo for my gun here. The one back there is for your Scar. Though I'd recommend frugality. We probably won't be getting much more ammo for these bad boys from here on out..." Rika responds.

"Good thing a sword does not need ammo," Saeko adds flatly.

(... Saeko is still throwing jabs at ranged weaponry I see...)

Saya then pulls a handbook from her bag and opens it.

"I don't know if the pharmacy is worth the trouble." She mumbles as she runs her finger over some text.

"We already got medicine to last us. And it's in a location surrounded by blocked-off roads. So I suspect the place will be a, it's a high target zone." Saya keeps on mumbling.

"It's on the way to the library, so let's just check it anyway," Rika responds.

"I guess..." Saya nods slightly.

"Besides, you can never have enough antibiotics. Or pain killers, or aspirin..." Rika adds with a shrug.

"Well, the main dish in this whole thing is the library. Everything else will granted make life easier. But if we don't know how to plant a damn potato we ain't gonna go very far..." I fold my arms as I tilt my head.

"True." Rika just shrugs back.

"If we are aiming to hole up in that place, gas might be secondary too, since we don't really need the generator and the car won't move too much. As long as the panels don't break down that is." Saya adds.

"Thus we need to know how to fix them. You know. Books." I chuckle.

"I'm not saying otherwise." Saya flatly responds.

And with that, the inside of the humvee turned quiet, the engine's voice being the only thing audible now...

I turn to look out the window to my left, only to find something pressing up against my right shoulder shortly after.

Turning to glance to my right, I find Saeko hugging my arm, eyes closed with her head on my shoulder...

Without speaking, I turn to look out the window again.

"You think a house supply store will have barrels we could use to collect rainwater?" I ask as I keep looking outside.

"Ehh, they will probably have planks. Worse case we make some ourselves, just need some waterproof fabric, like a big plastic bag to keep the water from leaking through the gaps." Rika answers as she keeps driving.

"I'm sure gonna miss bacon and eggs for breakfast though..." She adds with a mumble.

"If the only thing you'll be missing is your morning chow, then you should consider yourself lucky." I chuckle.

"But ma bacooodoon..." Rika lowers her head slightly as she shakes it.

"Oi, eyes on the road." Saya blurts out as she glances at the purpled-haired sniper.

"Oi? My, somebody is copying her dear commando~" Rika smirks as she lifts her head.

"I don't see his name on the words." Saya huffs back.

"Ha, most kindergarten response if I ever heard one." Rika laughs back.

"Why youuuuuu..." Saya just kept staring at Rika, her eye slightly twitching.

"Try not to jump on our driver, or this will be one very short trip.." I speak up as I turn my head at Saya.

"I'm not that stupid Nai..." Saya turns to respond. Only to trail off as her eyes turned to stare at the, napping Saeko, the one that was using my shoulder as a pillow.

Saya then just looks back at me with an annoyed frown, before turning to look back at the map.

"Oh look. I'm the idiot with the map again..." She mumbles with a whiny tone...

"You can give me the map if you wanna go back there and have a threesome. Just, don't start jumping too much, it'll make the whole car bounce." Rika casually remarks as she shrugs.

"W,w, what?!" What the only thing Saya replied with as she turned to stare at Rika, deep blush on her face as her eyes went wide open.

"Also try not to tease your map reader too much, lest we end up in the waste dump zone." I continue as I glance at Rika.

"Yes, yes~" Rika just chuckles as she waves her hand at me, before grabbing the wheel again.

"Have we decided who will go and collect the materials we need?" Saeko then asks, her head still on my shoulder.

"Probably me and you. Rika needs to be ready at the wheel, and also make sure the car does not get surrounded. And since we will probably have to be quick about it, means one run will probably not be enough. Saya could organize the stuff we bring in to not waste time." I respond as I turn to look outside.

A few seconds passed on, and nobody responded.

"Guess that's that then." Rika nods.

"Turn left here Rika." And Saya speaks up, pointing at the shallow river part we saw before.

"Oh, shit..." I then mumble as I look at the river.

"What's wrong?" Saeko asks as she lifts her head to look at me.

"We forgot to ask for a fishing store..." I respond. And everybody in the car stayed silent.

"Let's hope we find one on our way?..." Rika makes a slight, defeated laugh as she glances at me.

"Yeaaaaa..." I sigh as I push my forehead against the window glass.

"Or a book about fishing in the library. There's bound to be something we can use." Saya adds with a slight shrug.

"By the way, does anybody know how to sew?" I ask as I keep looking outside.

"Why? Hole in your pants?" Rika asks with a chuckle.

"Not, yet. But we won't exactly have the ability to buy new ones. And I'd rather not dress in rags. If you catch my drift." I respond.

"Hmmm, good point. Let's stop by a clothing store too, there's bound to be some on our way, and they are easy to spot since they have giant displays in their front.

"I agree, though you seem to be the last person who will need to worry about that. I saw that you still had plenty of spare clothes left in your bag, though they were all essentially the same..." Saya jerks her shoulders as she lets out a snicker.

"Our base also had clothes we could use. If they fit us that is. I for one know I have more than a few spares in that house I could use." Saeko adds with a calm tone.

"Well, I'll certainly need to get some for Shizuka then. Her clothes are bit, rare~" Rika adds as she smirks.

(In a world where ninety-nine percent of the girls got giant boobs, Shizuka still had trouble finding clothes to match hers. Guess there will always be outliers...)

And so, the car slowly turned silent once more. Saya occasionally pointed at a turning point to Rika, who followed our map reader's instructions.

It must have taken us about half an hour to exit the forest this time around. Since Rika drove a bit faster in parts we passed before and were easily

identifiable, like the path next to the river...

And so, as we reached the end of the forest and could start to make out buildings that replaced the trees in the distance...

"We're about to hit the concrete. I'm also seeing a lot more corpses wandering the woods. Guess we're back in hell." Rika sighs.

"Got used to the half a day of peace and silence in our new home eh?" I ask with a chuckle.

"You fucking bet I did. First time in a long time I woke up with a smile." Rika answers, her tone sounding rather serious as she glances at the central mirror.

"The sole reason we do this is so we won't have to get back into this hellhole again. Not soon at least." I respond as I turn to look at the corpses that were scattered among the few remaining trees. Before an abrupt end came to the woods, a short grassy upward patch, and we were finally on concrete road.

"I know. That's why we should not cut corners with this." Rika nods.

"Rika, go left, first turn to go right, then two intersections straight, then right again." And Saya points toward the intersection a bit off to our left.

"Wooa there. I lost you on, go left into that road." Rika's eyes go wide open as she glances at Saya, before looking back at the street, then turns left. Saya throws a glance at Rika, before turning to look back at the map.

"Are you anxious?" And a soft whisper in my ear.

Turning my head I find Saeko staring at me, her face close enough to smell the shampoo she used for her hair.

"You have been shaking your leg a lot ever since we left." She adds as she slides her hand to mine.

"Ehh? I always do that when I sit." I shrug as I glance at my leg.

Saeko nods as she puts the side of her head on my shoulder again.

(Though. Spending one day in relative safety shows even more how dangerous our lives have been so far...)

"How far away is the pharmacy from here?" I ask right after as I turn to Saya.

"Under non-apocalyptic events? I'd say five minutes. Now? Considering the number of roads that are blocked? I'd say about thirty." Saya responds as she keeps looking at the map.

"I could cut down that to ten." Rika adds.

"Please don't start driving like a rubberbanding NPC." I chuckle as I turn to look outside again.

"Rubber what?" Saya asks as she turns to me with a confused look.

"Rubberbanding. That's what people call the process when computer-controlled drivers in racing video games catch up to you no matter how well you drive. Also when online players start teleporting all over the place." I answer flatly. Saya just blinks at me a few times, then turns to look back at the map.

(At least she didn't call me a nerd?)

And so, the car kept driving towards its course, zigzagging past the scattered clusters of corpses and totaled or abandoned cars...

-About twenty-five minutes later-

"Turn a left here, then right on the next, the pharmacy should be on our left on that street." Saya finally looks up from the map and turns to glance at Rika, who just nodded as she kept staring at the road.

"How will we decide whether it is worth the risk or not?" Saeko asks right after. Now sitting normally on her seat, mostly because one certain pinkette was low-key whining about being shoved with all the work...

"Corpses outside, if it's barricaded from the inside. If it looks ransacked..." I respond with a slight shrug.

"Speaking of it..." I start to get up and head towards the hatch on the roof as I ready my scar-H.

"Once we get visual, I'll use the scope to get a better look," I add as I lift half my body over the hatch.

"Well, the road sure looks shit around here though," I mumble as we take the first turn.

(Hmm. I shou...)

I didn't even manage to finish mine though. When I felt, something, squeezing my ass?

Turning to look behind and under me, I find Saeko, casually sitting behind me, her hands on her thighs, staring at me with a small smirk...

(... Somebody's being naughty...)

And with that, the car reached the final intersection and took a turn to the right, I then lift my scar to look through the scope...

And instantly lower it, as the car came to a halt...

"Well, that solves the question if we'll go or not..." I chuckle as I enter the car. Looking at the relatively, big horde that was gathered around the pharmacy through the front windshield.

"Bail?" Rika asks.

"Bail," I respond.

"Bail." Saya adds right after. Saeko just nodded.

"Uhh, go back from the road which we came from, I'll have to plan a new path since this road is a no-go." Saya sighs as she looks at the map again.

Rika nods and hits the reverse...

"Library next?" I ask as I lean on my seat.

"Yea." Saya nods.

"Unless we find a clothing store on the way," Rika adds.

"How far?" I ask again.

"Not much, it's essentially a straight line, and the building is rather big. Hope it's not as bad there..." Saya answers, ending her sentence with a mumble.

"Yea, considering we'll have to enter it no matter what." I nod back as I turn to look outside again.

"By the way, you said the building is big. Have you seen it?" I ask as I tilt my head, still looking outside.

"Uhh. No, Khota told me that they told him that the building used to be a villa that belonged to some official that got caught in an exotic car smuggling operation or something. After they jailed him, they turned his villa into a library." Saya shrugs.

"Villa in the middle of the town huh? Wonder how big was his vacation home..." I mumble as I turn to look outside.

"Maybe he had a private island." Rika chuckles

"Also I think I can see a big building down the road, surrounded by a fenced-off park." Rika adds as she leans towards the front windshield.

"Yea, that's the one." Saya nods.

"You think it has survivors inside? Since it's fenced off?" I ask.

"I, don't think so. Even from here, the fence seems to have seen better days I can see parts missing. Plus it's in the middle of a rather populated location, not a good location to set base." Rika shakes her head as I poke at Saeko so I can move to the center of the back seats to look through the front windshield as well.

And sure enough, a couple of intersections later, we came upon a big villa-like building, three stories high. The park surrounding the building made it stick out like a shore thumb in this rather densely build location.

I could also see corpses wandering around the park, and the front gate was wide open.

"Alright. No way we skip this. So, how do we do it?" Rika asks.

"Hmm, the front gate, we can get in and close it behind us, use the car to block it since it seems to open towards the inside. But before that, look around the block, if the fences are busted, we can use one of the holes to bail after we are done, since the front gate will eventually gather a mob outside if we take too long. And, we will take too long. That house is fucking giant." I point towards the open front gate that was a little far off to our left as I speak.

"Hmm, alright. You and Saeko go inside?" Rika asks again.

"Yea, you and Saya will snipe any corpses already in the park that will start heading our way," I respond.

"What about the other holes, won't it let other corpses just waltz in?" Saya asks as she tilts her head.

"We have enough ammo to deal with a horde or three." Rika shrugs as she drives to the end of our road, then turns right, the fence to our left.

"I see another hole over there." Saeko then points towards the windshield, towards a gap in the far-off fence that ran horizontally towards the back side of the building.

"Hmmm, the roads on that side of the road are a mess further up ahead too." Saya then adds as she runs her finger on the map, passing through multiple 'X' marks

"We can exit from there, then just drive back to this street. The road around the building looks serviceable enough." Rika responds as she slows down the car. Before stopping completely

"Yea, I don't see why not." Saya just nods.

"So, we go in or keep looking?" Rika asks again. As she hits the reverse.

"Yea, let's get this show on the road." I nod as I turn to fiddle with my scar-H. And Rika starts to turn the Humvee around.

"What books should we focus on first?" Saeko then asks as she turns to me.

"Here." Saya then just turns to us and hands us a slip of paper. On it.

1. farming
1. electronics,
2. Fishing,
2. Trapping,
3. cooking,
3. tailoring,
4. carpentry/woodwork,
4. outdoors survival,
4. mechanical/car repairs,
5. medical.

"Uhh. There are multiple same numbers here. And medical is a five?" I ask as I tilt my head. Giving the paper to Saeko.

"Because the same numbers have the same weight. And we got medical books already. At the house we stayed after the mall, remember? Where, you almost got kicked out?" Saya adds as she turns to glance at me.

"Right. Did we manage to hold on to them huh? Then medical is indeed not high on the list." I answer with a small nod.

"And of course, if you find something that sounds as if we would need it later, take it." Saya then adds with a serious expression.

"Alright then..." I take a deep breath and put my hand on the door handle.

"I see corpses near the gate. Some outside some inside." Rika speaks up as we start to close in to the gate.

"Slow down." I tap her seat as I move to go up the hatch.

Before leaning half my body on the roof and taking aim at the corpses inside the estate's premises.

"The ones outside will start heading towards us, so..." And I open fire.

And sure enough. The corpses around the gate turned to shuffle toward the car the moment I started firing.

Though that didn't end very well for them. The closest one soon found out what happens if you try to walk up into a moving, armored military vehicle...

So a few flying corpses later, Rika reached the gate and turned to enter it.

"Alright, Saeko! Gate!" I slap the roof before climbing up completely through the hatch and jumping down next to the car, heading to one of the open gate doors as Saeko exited the car, and ran to the other.

The moment the gate was closed. I motion Rika, who was in the process of turning the car around so the trunk was looking towards the open main entrance of the building to drive up against the gate. Which she did.

"Alright, keep an eye for any corpses that walk up to the car, and open the trunk," I say as I knock on Saya's window.

"Ah, Naier wait!" Was Saya's response as she opened the door, and handed me a radio.

I nodded back, then looked at Saeko, who I mentioned to move towards the stairs ahead of us, which led to the big, open main door of the building.

Upon running up the stairs, we stopped by the doorframe and looked inside.

The door itself was made of thick carved wood, yet looked like it was left open, not broken into.

Now the insides...

I don't know if it was the two curved stairs that went to the upper floors on each side of the insanely big main hall that probably run the whole distance of the building, the giant ass chandelier in the center, which was sadly now smashed on the floor, or the several rows of bookshelves. Or the fact that the whole place was a mix of marble and wood.

But this place was sickeningly luxurious...

"And people came in here for free?" I whisper as I tilt my head.

"Focus Naier. We need to find what each bookcase has. Genres and specializations." Saeko nudges me with the edge of her sheath as she whispers back.

"Right. there's a counter straight ahead, between the two staircases, maybe they have a map there." I nod and enter the building.

"Weird how empty this place looks. I can see a few corpses, but. It looks pristine, other than a couple of spots where it seems there was some fighting." I mumble as I stop at the counter, inside it, a corpse, munching on a body. My guess is the librarian must have pissed off the wrong corpse...

More importantly though. A laminated, bloodied piece of paper on the counter that looked like a map with a list.

I instantly take the map from the desk as the corpse kept on with its business...

(The corpses are still munching on her? Though it looks more like the guy is nibbling her bones that actually eating whats left)

With that though, I clean the map with my sleeve and look at it...

(Hmm. All the books are on the first floor. The second floor is labeled as digital, and the third is private. Now, if the second is digital. It means they probably had a lot of books in storage. But, I got no idea if the emp fried the storage devices soo. We stick on first.)

I nod to myself as I raise my head to look around. Saeko is keeping guard next to me. Before I looked at the map again.

(Ok so. From left to right it's.

Literature, history, fiction, novels, informational, and others.

And each has subgenres. But, Informational is where we're at.)

Looking at the map, our target was the second row to our right, from here, it looked fine.

I point at our target destination as I glance at Saeko, then start to move.

Upon entering the corridor labeled 'informational'...

(Hmm, these library's bookshelves are tall, too tall. thankfully I see a couple of ladders that will let us check higher shelves.)

"Which sub-section should we focus on first?" Saeko asks as she casually walks up to a corpse ahead of us, and teaches it how to do the not alive correctly.

"Hmm, good, question..." I mumble as I glance behind me, then take a few steps into the hallway, turning to look at the map again.

(Let's see, informational subgenres. There's, a shiton of them. Animals, geology, sports, weather. But I guess we should focus on the ones we need, like technology, and I guess geology if it has stuff about plants that could help with farming. Survival and evolution seem interesting too)

"Start with the survival sector. I'll go see the geology one, then we will empty the technology one." I turn to show the map to Saeko, pointing to where the survival sector should be. Saeko nods and turns to head deeper into the hallway as I turned to my right since the geology subgenre was right next to me.

(Funny how this place is relatively empty of corpses. Guess people did not bother coming here after the outbreak. Or at least they tried and failed since the fence was already busted.)

Keeping an eye around me, I walk up to the books and check the spine names.

(Volcano activity, climate, soil interaction, city and village pollution spectrum, plant life, cave ecosystems, underwater geyser impact to its local ecosystem. Hmm, some of this stuff could go to animal stuff I guess. But a few of these could be interesting, like the plant life.)

I nod, take off my bag, open it, and start throwing books inside, going from small, or soft-cover ones, to bigger, hard-cover ones, since the

latter would fill the bag too fast.

A few seconds later, the bag was full.

And as I was about to close the bag...

-THUD-

A loud, blunt impact to my left...

Turning towards the noise, I find Saeko, on the top of the ladder, looking at a body next to the ladder that I was pretty sure was not there before.

Saeko, upon seeing that I was staring at her, points at the top of the bookshelves, then at the corpse.

I nod and point at myself, then outside. She nods back and extends the bag she was holding toward me.

I took a few steps towards her before she let go of it, letting me catch it.

And with that, I run outside. The moment I reached the stairs, I found that corpses had indeed started swarming outside the gate. Thankfully the Humvee seemed more than enough to hold the swaying gate.

Saya was also outside next to the now open trunk with her gun ready, while Rika was with her upper body through the Humvee's hatch.

"How long you can hold out?" I ask as I run down the stairs, and toss Saeko's bag into the trunk, then proceed to open my bag.

"As long as these idiots don't realize there is a hole in the fence a few meters down," Saya responds as she moves to open Saeko's bag and take off the books.

"Hmm? DIY kitchen?" She adds as she tilts her head, before placing the book down and picking another.

"We can check what has what later," I respond as I flatly flip the bag, and haphazardly empty the books next to Saya. Who made a short yelp before turning to stare at me.

Before she could react, I take Saeko's bag and empty it as well, then turn to run up the stairs, only to find Saeko jogging outside with several books in front of her, trying to hold them steady with her chin.

"Here, I'll get these to the car." I take the books from her as I hand her the bag, Saeko just nods before taking the bag and turning to run back inside the building. while I walked back to the Humvee, Saya now trying to separate the books that were scattered in the trunk.

"All the books~." I flatly chime, as I empty the bag inside the trunk, again.

"Did you have to do this again?!" Saya blurts out as she turns to stare at the new pile of books.

"Yes, because 'they' are getting impatient," I respond as I point behind her, through the front windshield. The mass of corpses steadily increasing...

I then turn to run towards the library again.

(If the unwanted guest keeps piling up like that we will have to bail before we can get everything we need...)

With that thought I run back to the same hallway I was in before, Saeko now haphazardly tossing books into the bag after looking at them for a second or so.

" I don't mean to rush you, but the gate is starting a tilt, a bit too much commando... " And my radio speaks up.

"Shit..." I whisper as I look past Saeko, toward the other side of the building.

(I see windows on the other side. Ok)

"Saeko! Start moving towards the other side of the building, we'll go through the back windows!" I shout as I point ahead of her, then turn to run towards the front door. Bringing the radio to my face.

"Drive, get to the back side of the building," I speak up as I reach the door, and upon throwing a last glance at the Humvee. I start to close the library's doors.

" *Naier behind you!* " That was what my radio responded.

Reflexively I crouch as I turn to look behind me, to find a corpse with its hands right in front of my mask..,

And a second later, the corpse was sent flying backward.

Turning to look at the humvee I see Rika aiming toward me. She then makes a thumbs up and crawls back into the humvee from the roof hatch.

" *Be more careful!* " The radio crackles as I finally close the front doors.

"Who needs to be careful when you have a team like this covering you." I chuckle as I turn to run towards the hallway Saeko is at.

" *Now that's sweet, but don't go off leaning on me all the time.* " The radio responds as I reach the hallway, Saeko with her sword drawn next to a few 'dead' corpses on the other side of the hallway.

"Tell us when you'll be on the other side." I respond to the radio as I start to toss books into my bag.

" *We just took the turn to the side of the building, we'll be past the building in a few.* " The radio answers.

"Naier! There are more corpses coming from the upper floors! We need to leave!" Saeko then shouts.

"Nobody told me it'll rain corpses today..." I whisper to myself as I toss the last book to my bag, then turn to run toward Saeko.

"Let's go! Out the back!" I shout as I point past Saeko.

The purple-haired samurai nods and turn to run to the window.

By the time I caught up, Saeko had opened the window and was waiting on the other side, while corpses had started to freefall from the upper floors.

Thankfully, none too close to cause any real problems as I also climbed out, and closed the window behind me.

"We could have just taken the door." Saeko casually points at the closed door a few meters away to our left.

"Yes, but it would not feel like we just raided the place that way." I chuckle as I look around me.

There was a rather huge green park ahead of us, corpses scattered all around.

"Where you two a..." And before I could finish speaking to the radio, the car popped up from the right side of the building, while driving in reverse.

" *Come on! The exit is back that way! Hurry up !*" The radio shouts.

I nod, and glance at Saeko, before breaking into a dead run. Saya opened the doors as we reached the car.

Saeko, who had run past me, jumped on the car, then entered through the roof, because, I dono. Finesse or some shit.

I just entered through the open door like a normal person.

"Go! Go!" I shout as I closed the door shut.

"Don't have to tell me twice dear~" Rika nodded and stepped on the gas, the Humvee's wheels spinning in place before the car started to move.

"Go left through the crashed fence and keep going straight on that road. We can set a path after we are away from, that." Saya points ahead through the windshield. The far end of the path we were on was now full of corpses, meaning that they had already overrun the front yard of the library.

And so, Rika did just that. Climbing over the toppled fence with the Humvee while in the meantime I and Saeko had turned to empty the bags inside the trunk.

"... Huh, that's a lot of books..." I mumble as I look at the pile we had gathered.

"Hopefully they will all be useful," Saeko responds as she starts to organize the books on the sides of the trunk, placing them next to or on the books Saya had already organized.

"So, where to next?" I ask as I turn to look behind me.

"Uhhhh." Saya looks at the map, running her finger through it.

"There's a gas station not too far from here. Then the flower store. The electronics store is not far off from the flower shop after that. And finally, the building supplies store, which is a supposedly short drive after the flower shop." Saya keeps running her finger on the map as she speaks.

"Gas station it is then." I nod slightly as I pick a random book, and turn to head to my seat.

"Let's see what sort of crap we picked..." I whisper as I look at the cover which was apparently about, hunting. Since the title read as

'Skinning and butchering for small game'.

I then open into a random page and...

"... That's one wrecked rabbit." I chuckle at the image of a, not alive rabbit.

"Hmm? Why are they letting all the blood spill out?" Saeko, who had scuttled up next to me asks as she also looks at the image.

"Apparently blood spoils extremely fast, from what it says here, so this lets the meat last longer I guess?" I respond as I keep reading from the book.

"What the hell are you two reading?" Saya then speaks up as she turns to look at us with a frown.

"This," I respond as I casually turn the book around and show her the image of the not-alive rabbit.

"Eww, did you have to show me 'that'?" Saya grimaces slightly as she leans back, looking back at the map, then at the image again, then back at the map again.

"Ask and ye shall receive." I casually shrug as I turn the book to me and continue reading.

And so, time once again passed, me and Saeko looking at the book, Saya giving Rika directions.

Until, after half an hour or so...

...

..

"I see the gas station," Rika speaks up.

"Hmm? Well, time sure passed fast." I lift my head to look toward the front windshield. Saeko had wrapped her arms around me and was essentially half laying on me, her cheek plastered on my shoulder. Until, she was up to a second ago.

"I see a lot of abandoned cars around. Few corpses. Also, where are the fuel canisters?" I ask.

"Under my seat, only two needed refilling, one was inside the estate, and the other we took from the airport." Saya points between her legs as she speaks.

"Alright. Once you close in, stop. I and Saeko will head in." I nod as turn towards the trunk, leaving the book.

As I turned around, Saya was trying to pull the canisters out, which would explain, why she had one leg on the dashboard...

(Huh, was Saya always this flexible?)

"We doing this fast?" Rika asks as she grabs her rifle.

"Yes. The car probably already alerted the nearby corpses. Drop 'em." I nod as I turn to make sure my door is clear of nasty surprises before opening it and exiting the car.

The gas station was straight ahead of us, cars haphazardly left inside and around it.

Saeko then exited as well, holding the two cans. Rika wasted no time to start popping the corpses at the gas station that had turned to shuffle towards us. Though she did ignore the ones that were too close to the actual station fuel pumps. While I and Saeko started to move.

Upon closing on the first abandoned silver sedan, I climb up and look at the surroundings.

"We got three by the pumps. we drop them and fill the canisters, keep an eye out for any other we can take with us." I speak up as I turn to glance to my side. Saeko standing next to me.

"Very well. Would you please hold this for me?" Saeko nods and extends the canisters she was holding to me.

The moment I took them. She giggled and dashed off towards the pumps.

The first corpse she essentially run kicked so hard it got sent flying several meters back, the second one she offed using her blade with a graceful spin, and the third she decapitated by using the momentum of her spin to make a sideways slash.

The third, which was still on the floor, she casually walked up to and stabbed in the head.

"Now I feel like a guy running after his girlfriend while she's on a shopping trip." I chuckle as I run up to Saeko with the canisters.

"Hmm? Would you like me to, reward you for carrying my bags?" Saeko 'asks' as she turns to look at me with a rather, sly smile.

"I'm going to keep that offer in mind," I respond as I leave the canisters and walk up to a pump, pull the fuel nozzle out, and press the handle...

Yet nothing came out.

"Empty?" I ask as I tilt my head.

"This one is not doing anything either," Saeko adds as she tried the other pump...

And then it hit me. The things were off. As in, I could not see the number on the counter...

"These things, need electricity to function..." I mumble before putting the nozzle back in its resting place.

"God I'm fucking retarded." I groan as I turn to look around. My sight stopping at the cars.

"Wait." I narrow my eyes, and after a glance around.

"Hose, we need a hose." My eyes stop at the pump. Or more precisely, the hose that connected the pump to the nozzle.

"Saeko, get your blade ready," I speak up as I grab the nozzle again, and pull it till it stretched out completely.

"Cut it here." I point where the nozzle connected with the hose. Saeko nods, and with a vertical cut, I was left with a nozzle in my hand.

I then toss the nozzle and pick up the severed hose.

"Now cut near the pump," I add as I glance around me. Spotting Rika waving at me as I suddenly feel the tension from the hose disappear.

Turning to look at it, I see it was now severed.

"Ok. Let's check the cars as we head back." I nod and turn to run toward the nearest abandoned car. A pickup truck.

Heading to its fuel intake spot, I flip the cover, open the valve and put the hose in, then lift my mask and balaclava and suck the other end.

And sure enough, shortly after...

"Bleh! How does something that smells so good taste so bad!" I spit some gasoline before spitting a couple more times as I turn to look away, then lower my headgear. In the meantime, Saeko took one of the canisters and moved my hand to put the hose inside the canister since gas has started to spill.

"I see corpses coming from behind our car. We need to hurry."
Saeko then speaks up.

"Saya, tell Rika to look behind her." I nod slightly and speak to my radio.

In response, I see Rika turning to look down through the roof hatch, nodding, and turning to look behind the Humvee, aiming at the incoming corpses.

"I can't hear the liquid with the gunshots echoing..." Saeko whispers as she leans towards the canister.

"Or we can just do this," I respond as I lift the hose so we can see the liquid flowing through it.

"As long as you can keep it steady." Saeko nods as she looks behind us.

"Corpses inside the gas station building, they seem to be trying to walk through the front glass panes." She adds as she keeps staring behind us.

"This one is empty. On to the next." I tap Saeko's shoulder as I take the hose and run to the next car on our way, the silver sedan I had climbed on...

By the time the hose was ready to spurt out gas, Saeko was next to me with the canister.

"I don't think we'll have time to do another one." Saeko mumbles.

"Yea. I'm starting to see too much movement..." I add as I nod...

"Hmm? Hey it is already running dry." Saeko then points at the hose.

"Ah? Ah shit. Yea fuck it. Let's go." I groan as I pull the hose and glance around, then pick up the almost full canister and start to head toward the car.

"Rika! Get ready!" I shout as I reach the door.

"Done already?" Rika asks as she turns to glance at me.

"Ehh, sorta," I mumble as I enter the car, then slide to the center, Saeko entering behind me and closing the door.

"Sorta?" Rika asks back as she climbs down.

"Did you know gas pumps need electricity?" I 'ask' as I look at them.

The whole Humvee turned quiet after a small. 'oh...'

"Well we got almost a full canister from two cars, so that's something," I add as I turn to leave the canister.

"Uhh, we got anything to wipe the thing? It's a bit, moist." I add as I look at the canister. While Rika started to drive away.

"Don't think so. Just leave it by the leg space in front of you. Leave the dry one in the trunk." Saya responds.

"Ohh, by the way. Can somebody refill my mags? I'm running low." Rika then speaks up.

"I'll do it," Saya adds as she leans towards Rika to reach the bullet case. The one by Rika's legs...

And, from where I was, all I could see was Saya's lower half, as the rest disappeared behind Rika's seat...

"Oh my Saya, watch where you're touching~" Rika chuckles.

"S, shut! And quit man spreading!" Saya quickly retorts.

"I like driving like that. Not my fault you shoved your face between my legs." Rika casually answers.

Saya finally gets up with a flustered face and an angry frown. The clips and a couple of bullets were in her hands.

"By the way, where to next?" I ask.

"Flower store. I already told miss pervert which road to take" Saya answers as she turns to look at me, her angry frown disappearing.

"Yaw, don't speak dirty to me Pinky, you'll make me lose control~" Rika chuckles back.

"As in, I'll crash the car." She continues.

"Yeah, don't do that please," I respond as I turn to look out the window.

"So three stops left now," I mumble to myself.

"Yes. And hopefully we will have more time to get what we need from there." Saeko adds.

"I would not count on it. The next set of locations are close to each other, I suspect that means it's a market district. Which means it probably saw a lot of traffic, both before, and after the outbreak." Saya shakes her head as she turns to focus on the map.

"We should honestly pray that the info we got is not outdated by now and that the roads are still clear" She adds as she lets a small sigh.

"Don't jinx it now." Rika glances at Saya for a split second before focusing back on the road.

"So, flower store. Guess that means we are looking for farming-related stuff there?" Rika then speaks up again.

"Yea, a few more shovels would help, fertilizers, seeds, and hopefully a few more in-depth books or, uhh, tutorials for people are that not made of green thumbs," I respond with a small nod.

"If that location is a market district, it should mean it might have other storers near right?" Saeko then asks.

"Yea, like that clothing store we mentioned." I nod again.

"By the way, where are the ropes for the stuff we might tie to the roof?" I ask as I turn to look toward Saya.

"Under Rika's seat. You think I'd forget?" Saya responds by glancing at me with an arched eyebrow.

"Didn't see them, had to make sure," I answer.

"Considering I laid out the path, I had a constant reminder that we're going to need a way to tie materials on the top of the car what with our last destination." Saya shrugs slightly and turns to look back at the map.

"Hoo, hey I'm seeing a lot of wrecks up ahead." And Rika speaks up.

"Yea, turn left on the next intersection. They go straight, then right two intersections after that." Saya nods as she looks at the mess ahead, then looks back at the map...

While I turned to look back outside the window, and...

I saw it...

"Uhh, Rika? Stop the car for a bit..." I speak up flatly as I keep looking out the window.

"What's up?" Rika asks as she slows down the car to a halt.

"You girls want your clothes right?" I ask.

"Ohh, you found a clothes store?~" Rika asks as she turns to me for a smile.

"Yes, and no. I found 'my' clothes store." I respond as I open the Humvee door and get out.

"Hmm? I see no clothing stores here." Saeko, who had popped her head out my door responded.

"I do," I respond flatly as I point at the store a few meters behind us.

"That is a clothing store? It looks, weird." Saeko tilts her head as she also exits.

"Because it's not a clothing store. It's a video game store..." Saya, who was leaning between the two front seats groans.

"Hey, you want your lace panties, I want my video games," I respond with a shrug as I start to walk. Saeko following behind me.

"Hmm? Would you want me to get some lace panties?" Saeko then whispers as she leans closer to me.

"It's a figure of speech. And, don't you already have lace panties?" I ask as I turn to look at the purple-haired samurai.

"You might want me to get something more, exciting." Saeko just giggles in response.

(Sneaky sneak.)

With that, we move to the front of the store...

The front face of the store was a smashed glass window pane, the insides looked, I would not say looted, more like messed up.

I could see game cases open on the floor, controllers, even console parts, yes parts. As in some infidel had gone ahead and smashed them to bits.

And who that infidel was? I'd guess the zombified dudes inside the store, half of them actually looking like your average otaku.

(Hmm, I'd rather have an actual pc. But since they tend to have digital copies more than actual disks, a console is my best bet right now.)

I tap at Saeko's shoulder to get her attention, then point inside, and make a slit-throat motion. She nods, draws her blade, and enters the store.

Me following behind her shortly after.

(Let's see if they have tags for each console section. Two of them, Xbox and ps look almost totaled, so, we're going with, Nintendo? I mean, it does have the most party games if you think about it, could be good if we want to make a group event or something. But most importantly, I don't see the console... oh, they are at the far end of the store, where Saeko is, playing...)

I shake my head and draw my blade, then close into the furthest corpse compared to Saeko.

Just as I was about to raise my blade and bring it down on its head, I notice in its bag, a console carton was sticking out, along with several games.

(Ohh, you picked a ps4 and a bunch of games for me? My thanks ma dude. Hah, I guess even here, a ps5 is hard to find...)

So, instead of bringing my blade down vertically, I take a step back and switch posture, to follow through with a horizontal slash, sending the corpse's head flying.

Before the body could fall, I grab the bag and take it off as the body slumps down.

I then turn to look at Saeko, who was looking around for any more targets.

"Ok, now." I run up to Saeko.

"Saeko, see that carton that says Switch? Grab that, then on that aisle over there that has cases labeled 'Nintendo' on the top, pick as many as you can." I point towards a switch over the counter behind her, then at the still-standing aisle at the corner.

"Very well, what you will do?" Saeko asks back.

"Check for any peripherals, and get some stuff for, this" I respond as I raise my bag.

"*Hurry up, corpses are starting to surround us.*" And the radio speaks up.

"Roger," I respond as I head to the counter, look behind it, then lean to grab a few controllers, both for the switch and the ps4, then throw them in my bag.

I then run to the ruined ps aisle and start to scavenge any case that still looked serviceable. All the while keeping an eye out for the corpses that passed by the store, and towards our ride.

"*Naier hurry up!*" And the radio speaks up again.

(Faaaack, so much stuff I want here. Can't these corpses take a break?! Ok, ok focus, don't get greedy, we got stuff, let's go.)

"Saeko! Did you get anything?" I ask as I close my bag after filling it up.

"Yes! I, think. I am not exactly versed in video games to know what is good. I just picked everything I found as long as it was not a duplicate." Saeko responds.

"Alright, Bail!" I shout as I turn to run, yet my sight falls on yet another game I wanted...

The moment I grabbed it, I saw another and another...

(Fuck! Just! Go god damn it!)

I throw a quick slap on my head with the case, shake my head and start to run.

The moment I got out. I saw a mass of corpses between me and the Humvee.

"Ahh, shiet, Saeko dear, hold this a bit." I groan as I hand Saeko my sword, and grab my handgun with my free hand.

I run to the other side of the street, aim at the nearest corpse, and pull the trigger. The noise causing the corpses to now turn to head towards me.

"Ok, I see a path from here, I should be able to make it." I nod, glance at Saeko, and motion her to move. She looked at me for a few seconds, nodded, and started to run.

With that, I holstered my handgun and started to run, console bag under my arm, corpses closing in from the left, wall to the right.

(Is this rugby? Argh, what the fuck am I thinking! I know you're hyper because 'ViDO GAMS' But Focus you hyperactive idiot!)

I shake my head and keep running past the corpses.

And just as I was about to reach the end of the path, a single corpse decided to break off from the group. And walk directly on my running path...

(Of course, that would happen!)

Yet, I was already sprinting, too fast. So Instead of trying to avoid it. I essentially run into it, slamming it with my shoulder and sending it tumbling to the side as I reached the car. The door opens with Saeko already inside.

(I did end up playing rugby after all...)

That was the last thing I thought as I got in, and almost fell on the seats.

Well, I did fall, with a controlled motion. Yes, planting my face between Saeko's legs was my exact plan...

"We are in! Go!" I heard Saeko shout as she placed her hand on the back of my head.

"... Ughh, I can't believe we just did that for a bunch of video games..." I hear a moody pinkette groan.

"I'll fucking do it again," I respond as I turn my head towards Saya, still on Saeko's legs mind you, who had started, patting my head?...

"So uhhh, flower store?" I ask as I try to get comfortable.

"Unless you want to stop over at another stupid shop." Saya turns to look at me with narrowed eyes as she responded.

"... Ehh, maybe?" I respond nonchalantly.

"By the way Naier, you should put that back into its rightful place." Saeko then brings my blade to my field of view as she speaks up.

"Right." I blink a couple of times, before taking the blade and trying to sheath it, without moving from my lying spot...

"For god's sake! Are you trying to stab somebody? Get up and sheath that thing normally." Saya hisses as she backs off.

"Too comfy, I ain't moving a dime now. I'm a slug now." I retort as I finally seat the blade. Saya just groans as she focuses back on the map.

"Actually..." I start to get up as I speak, Saeko lifting both her hands as she tilts her head.

"I'll see if we got any farming books back here. Just so I can have a basic understanding of what we might need. Other than shovels and more books." I add as I turn to slide into the trunk.

"Not a bad idea." Saeko nods as she turns to slide between the two back seats so she had a clear view of me and the trunk.

"I think I saw some books whose cover noted farming and greenery. Where did I see it though..." I mumble as I start to look around the trunk.

And sure enough, a few minutes later, I found several books that could fit the bill.

"Well, once we reach our target, tell me." I add as I glance behind me, then turn to focus on the book in my hands...

A special thanks to my supporters, since there's a good chance this would have taken much, much longer without em xD

Outing pt2

The chance of errors and stuff is real. Since I could not proof read it as much as I wanted.

kasicair- I get off seeing people like you losing their f-ing marbles xD

DarkZeroSlayer- Well, here's another.

teithos- Yes, he has no propane torch

OechsnerC, guest that loves it - Thank you.

AlexianBlithworth- Yes

Alphaaa'N'OmeGas - You and me both xD

BiazarKaiser - True enough

StoneTheLoner -The virus was worldwide, based on how they showed the white house getting overrun. And he could go on an island. But you would rather go and live on an Island, alone, with your only company being seagulls? And if you mean a populated island and not the ova one, then it wouldn't be a hotd fanfic would it (Which side point was not even safe in the end xD) But yea, If this was pure, survive the zombie outbreak story, going to a self-sustainable island would skyrocket his survival chances.

demon edge- Uhh, O,k?

Argonautt - Yes, he procrastinator ultimator.

NazgulBelserion- Ok.

Bernkastel- I can't believe it either.

JackFoxGaming24- Here ya go, ze update

Guest with a good memory (ch 75)- Crap, you're right xD. Somebody had sticky fingers indeed, and I got zero relocation of my own story xD. Oh well, plot holes be like.

"And here I thought the saying, girls and their clothes was only a meme..." I mumble as I look at the Humvee's trunk.

A whole corner of it, filled with clothes, right next to the gardening tools.

"We are aiming to stay up there long term right? We will need clothes." Saya responds flatly.

"Like a nightclub dress?" I ask as I tilt my head, grabbing a rather revealing-looking club dress.

"This thing seems too tight to even do anything in it..." I add as I raise it to look at it, the shiny silk fabric it was made of reflecting off my flashlight.

"Oh I can think at least 'one' thing it could be good for." Rika chuckles.

"Pervert." Saya mumbles.

"Says the one who picked it." Rika retorts.

"I, didn't pick it thinking of that." Saya glares back at Rika with a deep blush as she responds.

"Oh, I see the electronics store." Rika's voice then quickly changes to a more serious tone as she points ahead. Then turns off the car engine. Essentially cutting that conversation short.

"I don't see a lot of corpses. But the front seems wrecked, looters?" Rika adds as she tilts her head.

"Let's hope not. There aren't any other stores we can search nearby, not with how the roads are at least." Saya sighs.

"Well, one way to find out. As we said, engine off as we close in." I add as I let go of the clothes and turn to check my gun.

"I know, I know. The engine's already off" Rika nods as I slide into my seat.

And the car, after a few seconds, slides past the targeted shop, letting us check the insides as the Humvee kept going down the street.

"Damn, the insides look as wrecked." I mumble as keep looking through the window.

"I don't see a lot of corpses inside though." Saeko adds while leaning next to me.

"Didn't seem to be heavily looted though, saw a good amount of stuff scattered about too." I add as the car finally stops, and I slowly open the door.

"One way to find out if it has what we need then." Saeko adds as she readies herself.

"Remember, Gps. Don't trail off. We will go around the block and come back, be out by then." Saya adds as I start to exit the car.

"Right..." I mumble as I look around. Then turn to look at Saeko as she also exited the car.

"Ignore the corpse outside if you can." I add as she closes the door behind her.

"I know. No need to waste time out here." She responds with a nod.

And so, we quickly moved towards the electronics store, passing by a few corpses as the Humvee started up again.

Upon closing in, I put my back to the wall next to the wrecked display window. Then peek inside.

(I see a few of em corpses moving towards the exit. Probably because the Humvee's engine just restarted.)

I glance behind me toward Saeko and motion her to wait. She just nods back.

And soon after, a couple of the corpses walked out of the store and into the main street.

I then glance inside again.

(Ok, I still see a few. But fighting them will bring the corpses outside in the store again. We got to do this silently.)

I turn to Saeko, flip the safety on my gun, and let it fall on my side, then shake my head and make a silent motion, before turning to enter the store. After pulling my combat knife, and flicking the gun's safety back to semi-auto that is. Better safe than sorry after all.

Sadly the insides, as mentioned, were a mess. Whole shelves toppled down on half-visible remains, laptops, phones, cables, and electronic parts littering the floors.

(Gps, gps. A phone can have a gps. Maybe one that was closed did not fry. If I can't find a normal gps I'll take a few. Though I don't know if they will actually work without the internet. I mean, they don't have the maps pre-loaded in there do they? And they don't function as phones either, what the the lines being down.)

With that in mind, I glance around me. I was right next to the laptop section right now. I could see phones on the other side of the room, a few of them still neatly set up on their stands. Though all of them showed a glorious, black screen.

Oh and a few corpses in the middle...

deeper inside I could see more gadgets, headphones, usb cables, phone cases, that sort of thing.

(Hmm, if there are any gps devices, this will be our best bet.)

I start to quietly move towards the deeper side of the store. Making sure I don't step over any wrecked electronics.

(Hmm? Ohh, earbuds.)

I tilt my head and grab a few wireless earbud cases. And put them in my pant's bigger pockets.

Upon getting closer to the back end, I see three corpses, all knelled down, chewing on what seemed to be a person that was wearing a hoodie, a bloody bat next to him. And two more corpses chewing down another hooded individual that they had tossed on the register counter.

(Guess we just found the looters.)

I take a slow deep breath and look around. And, on the other side of the 'feast'...

Several tablet-sized screens on display, with their closed-box counterparts right under them. A label reading.

-Sound-controlled Car gps.-

(Perfect. If I didn't have these munchers in front of me that is...)

I glance at Saeko, who just keeps looking back at me, then behind her, toward the still-clear exit.

(We should get these and just bail, better we find Rika on the road rather than in here.)

I take a deep breath, then show Saeko the gps on the other side. Then show her the three corpses, and make a slit throat motion.

She nods and puts her hand on her blade's hilt.

(They are preoccupied with eating. We take these three down, grab a gps and high tail it outa here.)

With that thought, I ready my knife, silently walk up behind one of the three corpses as it was on its fours. And with a quick motion, I push down the corpse by the collar, and jam my knife down its head, while in the meantime Saeko stabbed the second corpse in the head.

The third corpse started to slowly raise its head from the guts it was munching on.

I quickly pull the knife out, get up, and throw a kick in the thing's face as I start to run to the gps stand, then quickly grab two gps that were still in their packaging put one under my armpit, and the other in my free hand. Then run back towards Saeko as the other two corpses by the counter started to turn around.

I motion with my head as I run past the fallen corpse and toward the still-open path. Saeko quickly followed behind me.

(I know I should not but...)

As I passed the laptop corner, I glanced at the most expensive one, sheath my knife, and grab a carton box that was right under the display laptop.

And start to run, like a thief with loot on both arms.

The moment I got out I looked to my right.

(No humvee in sight. Corpses moving toward us.)

Then to my left.

(Corpses moving away from us.)

I nod and turn to Saeko.

"Let's keep moving towards the corpses moving away from us, the Humvee should come behind us." I whisper as I start to move. Saeko just nods.

"You want me to hold on to something?" She asks right after.

"Nah, just keep corpses at a safe distance." I respond. Saeko nods back again

I then start to move casually as I glance around.

"These things better work." I whisper as I get a better grip on the gps under my armpit.

Just as I finish that, the sound of an engine in the distance behind us.

Turning to look behind me, I still see nothing. And the moment I turn around to keep walking, I saw the corpses had stopped, and started to also turn around.

(Right, engine.)

I motion at Saeko to do a full turn, and start walking back the way I came.

(They better hurry up. Feel like I'm a rat in a maze right now...)

Nonetheless, I keep walking.

Until finally, I saw the car popping up from a corner. With a powerslide...

(Huh, didn't know Humvees can drift. No wait, a powerslide is different than a drift. So it can't drift?...)

I blink a couple of times as I see the car almost rear-end into a corpse before it started to beeline toward us.

"Come on!" I turn to Saeko and motion for her to move as I start to run toward the car.

And, with the tires grinding on the asphalt, and a flying corpse...

The Humvee stopped next to me, Saya quickly opening the back door.

"Get in!" She shouts as she slides away from the door.

Not wasting any time I enter the car and make room for Saeko to enter as well, which she does shortly after.

"They're in! Go!" Saya quickly shouts, and the car starts to move once again.

"Well, that went rather smoothly." I respond as I leave the two gps in the middle of the two front seats, along with the laptop box.

"Really?..." Saya sighs as she looks at the laptop..

"Indeed." I add as I pull the wireless earbuds and place em on the laptop box.

"... Really now?" Saya groans.

"And these are not even sealed. How did you know it was not in some corpse's ears before?" She adds as she picks one case and flips it open.

"You've seen a lot of corpses taking earbuds off and placing them in cases? The smartest thing I've seen them do is roll down inclines." I respond with a shrug.

"Touche..." Saya sighs as she closes the cases.

"We should clean them anyway though. There probably some disinfectant back in the base." I add.

"Agreed." Saya nods slightly.

"Ummm, I don't mean to cut the reunion, but I got no idea where I'm going here." Rika then speaks up.

"Right, let me get up front." Saya nods and moves to crawl to the front. Did I mention I was sitting in the middle? Yes, probably why I then got an, ass-full of Saya...

(... Ok, now you're asking for it.)

-Slap!-

"Eeep!" Saya quickly tenses up as she turns to stare at me with a blushing face.

I just shrugged.

"Pervert." She mumbles as she crawls to the front seat.

"That echoed quite a bit, how much strength did you even put?" Saeko asks as she tilts her head.

"Ehhh, no idea?..." I shrug again.

Judging how Saya was fidgeting though, enough to make the pinkette wiggle about.

"Now, we should see if these bad boys work." I add as I pick one of the gps and start to unpack it.

Upon opening the case, I find the cord ending with a plug that went inside the power outlet that usually had the cigarette lighter in.

"This car does have a power outlet right?" I ask as I look toward the central part of the dashboard. Seeing three power outlets side by side.

"Three huh. Well, let's check it." I add as I lean forward and pull one of the plugs.

"Hold this, carefully though you don't burn yourself." I add as I hand the lighter to Saya. Who silently picks it up a blush still on her cheeks.

I then plug the gps in, and...

"Ohh, it's alive~" I chime as the screen turns on, and shortly after.

"And it actually works too." I add as the map shows up, with us moving on it.

"Were we going?" I ask as I press the destination button, the gps making an audible 'blip' sound.

"185-1345 Teragawa" Saya flatly responds. The gps then make another blip, and a path appears in front of the arrow.

"Well, big chance most of the streets are busted, and we don't really need to follow lane direction. But, moving map with player location is always easier to use than a normal map." I add as I lean forward and stick the gps to the window.

Rika looks at it, nods, and then presses the zoom-out button that was on the top right a couple of times.

"Thankies lov~" She adds as she winks at me.

I just nod and lean back up.

"So, what do we need from the last stop?" I ask right after.

"Plaster, wood planks, plastic barrels, nails, screws, fuses." Saya adds as she lowers her head to look at her notebook.

"Might seem like we don't need a lot of stuff, but we need quantities of em. Plastic barrels will take up a lot of space, and we need as

many as we can fit on the roof with the ropes. Same with wood planks and to a lesser extent plaster nails and screws." She continues.

"Hmm, planks can go the length of the humvee, it's long enough to not have them stick out if we place them under the barrels. We can also leave the trunk open and fill it, we just gonna need to have the two in the back to keep watch that nothing flies out." I add.

"Yea. Would not want to lose a dress now would we?" Rika chuckles.

"If me and Naier sit in the trunk we can move lighter stuff that might fall off to the front seats." Saeko adds.

"Yea, good idea." I nod. Then turn to open the ammo box in the trunk.

"Guess now we will have to sit and actually fill the car. So we might have to hold back the corpses." I continue.

"Yea, and I doubt we will have a fence gracefully placed around for us." Rika responds.

"And there are no stores that fit the bill for miles after this either." Saya adds.

"Huh, feels like we're about to fight a final boss here." I chuckle as I check my gun.

"Do you have to say it like that?" Saya sighs back.

"Well, we 'are' going to be chilling for god knows how long after this. So you could say this could be the very last stop we got to do. If all goes well." Rika responds.

"How far?" Saeko then asks.

"Hmm, a couple of minutes." Rika responds.

"How should we go about this?" Saeko then asks again as she turns to look at me.

"Small things first, will probably be quieter to haul about. If we can't barricade and take our time" I respond. Saeko just nods.

And, a few minutes passed. Me checking my gun, Saeko looking out the window, Rika driving, and Saya writing in the notebook.

"Hmm. I can see the building on the Gps. Seems to have a big open space behind it..." Until Rika speaks up.

"A garage to let trucks park and unload maybe?" I respond as I tilt my head.

"Would make sense, it's supposed to be a big store after all." Saya nods.

"Hmm, if we could fortify that spot it would give us time to go in and scavage." I narrow my eyes as I fold my arms.

"If it's fenced off." Saeko adds. I just nod back.

With that, I turn to the trunk and pick up the rope, then pass it around my arm.

"By the way what if we find dry walls?" Saya then asks.

"Too big to carry along with everything else. That's why I aim for plaster." I respond.

"Well, we should be glad the walls that got wrecked were not actual walls with wiring and plumbing inside. Don't think any of us would know how to fix that..." Saya adds as she turns to look at the notebook on her lap.

"True enough. Now for plaster or dry walls. To be honest, it depends on what we find and what is easier to carry on spot. For all we know

there could be a working truck full of dry walls parked right outside with the keys in the ignition." I chuckle.

"Heh, yea, as if..." Saya chuckles back.

"Ei, I see the store." And Rika speaks up.

"Weee, the front is a mess." She adds as I turn to look through the front windshield.

And truth was, the front was, inaccessible. Mostly because there was a rig half through the front of the store, with everything you could expect from such a crash around it, like the spilled contents of its wrecked trailer and the masses that would follow after that much, noise...

"I see the turn to the back area before the crash shite. Let's hope it's better..." Saya then points at a, not-so-small uphill path next to the building that disappeared behind an erected concrete wall.

"Aight. Let's go." I nod as I back off from the middle of the seats.

And so, the Humvee takes the turn shortly after.

And comes face to, underside with a side-flipped van, though there was still enough space for the Humvee to squeeze through.

"Hmm..." I just kept looking at the van as we entered the back-loading area behind the store.

"Ho boy." Rika then whistles as she stops the car.

There was already a semi-truck parked there in the middle, its trailer doors open. Two forklifts with pallets with closed wooden crates behind it.

A few semi trucks without trailers parked to the far end and overall, a not very fun amount of corpses

Also, the whole location was surrounded by concrete walls.

"Rika, get us next to that van ahead of us, the one with the open door, then go check if the other side is clear to drive through. And tell me via radio." I point ahead through the windshield at a parked van that looked toward us.

Rika nods and drives up to the van.

"Saeko, let's go. We will use that van to block the path we came from, probably need to push the thing. And, start dropping corpses, we need to clean this place." I add as I exit the car, making sure I had the radio on me, then aim at the nearest zombified construction worker, and open fire.

The moment I reached the van, I made sure the inside was empty, before I entered, pulled the handbrake then exited and started to push, Saeko running past me and going behind the van.

Which then slowly started to move...

Looking through the door window, I used one hand to steer the van towards the downhill path that led outside, corpses already heading toward us from the outside.

" Well Naier, good thing I have put some good suspensions on this baby. The other side is blocked off, but there is a ramp we could use to, heh, jump off ." The radio speaks up.

(Good, cause if the other side was blocked off it would have to be careful with this side.)

And the moment the van reached the downhill part.

"I got it from here! Go help the others!" I shout as I enter the van and grab the steering wheel.

"So we can block this road off then." I whisper as I let the van roll toward the gap between the flipped van to my right and the wall to

my left...

And the moment it got close, I make a sharp turn to the left, jamming the car between the wall and the totaled van.

I then pull the handbrake and exit, closing the door behind me.

"We gouchi." I nod as I glance at the van, then ran back up the road to the unloading area, Rika and Saya already shooting corpses from the furthest side, Saeko, doing Saeko things to the corpses near me.

"Stop shooting, come over to this side, let the gunshots gather corpses on this side, since we want to use the other side to leave." I pick up my radio as I speak.

" *Rogger.* " The radio responds as the gunshots stop.

"Saeko! Switch places, The Humvee will come here, go the other side!" I shout as I motion with my arm, then start to run.

Saeko nods, and starts to also run, but not before essentially using the nearest corpse as a step to have a, flying start.

And soon after, the Humvee drove between me and Saeko, tires screeching to a halt behind us.

"Alright! Let's get this done!" I shout as I lift my gun, and aim at the nearest corpse.

" *If you can, go check the rig's trailer too, might have some things already packed up for us.* " The radio adds.

"Right." I nod as I pull the trigger, and a send a corpse flying. Then turn to head toward the Half truck in the middle.

The moment I reach the nearest forklift next to the trailer. I read the info in the wooden crate

(Bricks.)

Then run to the second forklift.

(Small Palletes.)

I shake my head and turn to look inside the trailer, which was still full of crates.

"Welp, here goes nothing." I run up to the back of the trailer and climb in, then open my rifle's flashlight.

Looking around the trailer. I find two corpses on the far end of the trailer.

"Failed hiding spot huh..." I mumble as I open fire.

"Damn that was loud, even with all the headgear." I groan as I shake my head, then start glancing around at the crate labels...

(Plastic tubes, glass, tiles, more bricks, cement, concrete. Ohhh? Plaster and lath? Noice. Renforsced metal bars. We could use that too in some way. Actually, we could use everything here... Uhhh. Yea, stay with plaster, and maybe get some metal rods and tiles inside the car by opening the crate. Gonna need a crowbar for that though. And I don't see tools here...)

"Ok, the rig here has two of the things we need, plaster and lath, aka wood. Need to find barrels, and maybe some tools to open some other crates and get some stuff like reinforced bars and floor tiles." I speak up at my radio as I turn around.

" *Rogger, should we come and start loading up the car?* " The radio asks.

"Once we clear the corpses here yea, I and Saeko will go inside to find tools and barrels." I respond.

With that, I ran out of the trailer, and jump down. Then look around, The Humvee already heading toward me.

(Didn't I Just tell em to kill the corpses around here first?... Oh well, at least there are few of em left.)

Saeko is on the far side doing, Saeko things again.

"Or I can go myself while they deal with the corpses here." I whisper as I look towards the building's rear gate doors, all of them wide open.

"... Yea. Better not, trying to spread too thin is a good way to get our asses handed to us." I shake my head and start heading toward Saeko.

"We are going inside! Come on!" I shout at Saeko as I stop a safe distance away from her, partly because I had a gut feeling there was a chance I'd get a sword to my face if I got too near with how 'focused' she seemed.

Saeko turns to me with a visibly flushed face, and nods. A small side grin on her face.

With that, we both started to head towards the building, taking down the few remaining corpses between us and the building itself.

Upon reaching one of the open gates.

"Let's check here if they have anything we need." I speak up as I look around.

"Barrels, and tools. Hammers, crowbars, sledgehammers, saws. That sorta stuff." I add as I turn to Saeko.

"Very well." Saeko nods and casually walks deeper inside the building.

"Uhh, be careful of corpses?" I add as I tilt my head.

"I already cleaned this place out." Saeko casually responds as she waves her hand.

"Ehhhhh? Already? But there were still corpses outside." I add as I start to follow her.

"The idea that they were trapped in here with me excited me more~ So I came here first." She added as she turned to glance at me with a small smirk.

"Right..." I just blankly stared at Saeko before turning to look around.

"Well, keep your guard up, just in case." I add as I break off and start heading in another direction.

"Of course~" Saeko responds as she tilts her head.

The insides now, were indeed corpse free, at least, of the walking and bitty one variety, cause there were a few plenty of the dead-dead variety.

(Well now, if i was tools and barrels, where would I be?...)

With that, I start looking around. Quickly finding that at my left side, towards the bigger part of the storage area, were stacked with boxes on metal shelves

So once again, I was looking at closed crates for the info on what they had inside...

This time looking at the rows of selves that were filled with such crates...

(Hmm, light bulbs, we could use those. And the crate is open too.)

Also, the fact that I was looking for barrels did not stop me from some, opportunity shopping. I still had a bag I could fill after all.

(Rolls of knauf insulation? Yes fucking please~. Sealants? Don't mind if I do. I got diddly squat idea of how to use em, but better to have them than not. Hmm, paint. Aesthetically it would be good, but all I get now is stuff that has a survival aspect in it as well, bulbs for

light, insulation so we don't freeze, and sealants for any holes we might get. Will focus on getting more important stuff first. Like these here ol nails)

And then.

"Ohh? This crate says plastic barrels, four hundred liters, and is open~" I whisper as I peek inside. to find only, one drum.

"... Bleh..." I sigh as I pull the drum out.

"Hmm smaller than I thought in weight and height, we can stuff like six of em in the trunk, maybe keep some on us as well, could get ten of em if I find em." I add as I turn to look up. And see that the crates on the metal shelves next to me were also labeled 'water drums'.

"Oh?" I tilt my head, and climb up the shelf.

crate, closed.

"Bleh..." I turn to look up and look at the top crate, then at the floor under me...

"..." Then start to climb up.

Upon reaching the top shelf, I grab the crate.

"Looks steady enough. But, unluckily for you..." I crack my neck.

"My cat genes demand you fall." I add as I slide next to the crate, then behind it, and putting my back on the wall to use as leverage, I put my boots against the crate, and push...

And, a few seconds later...

-CRASH-

The crate was Humpty Dumpty'ed. And Saeko, who was holding a crowbar, was staring at me from below.

"... Mau..." I respond flatly as I look at Saeko. She just chuckles and shakes her head. Then turns to look at a lone corpse that had entered the building, probably due to the crashing noise.

By the time I had climbed down, the corpse had already been taught how to do the not alive correctly...

"Hmm, strong crate, still closed." I whistle as I look at the still intact crate.

"Here." And Saeko, who had walked up next to me, handed me the crowbar.

"I found more stuff over there, probably things the workers used, as they were not packaged." She adds as she points at what seemed to be workstations with half-constructed items.

"Good, take em and get 'em to the car, we're nearly done." I nod and jam the crowbar into the crate's side. Saeko nods back and turns to leave.

"Mau~" She whispers as she glances at me with a smirk before leaving.

"Ok, lets, git!" And with a sudden burst, I put force on the crowbar. The crate budged, but, just barely.

"How many nails did they put in this fucking thing?!" I groan as the wood slowly starts to creak.

Until, with a snap, part of the crate breaks off. Looking inside I see more barrels, judging from the size, there must have been like six of them inside

"Hmm seven total, not bad I guess." I nod and start breaking the rest of the crate.

"Naier. We are set." And a new voice speaks up, turning to it, I find Saya staring at me.

"You tied the crates?" I ask.

"Yea, we used the ropes and the pallets along some metal rods under them to roll them to the hood." Saya nods.

"You opened the crate with the metal rods?" I ask as I tilt my head.

"Uhhh, Rika did. She got pissed we could not find anything else to move the crates and started shooting it..." Saya responds as she scratches her cheek, looking slightly sideways.

"... If it works..." I sigh as I pull one of the barrels.

"Let's get these to the car, then we bail. Tell the other we got like seven of em" I add as I roll one of the barrels to her.

"Alright." Saya nods as she leans to pick up the barrel...

So, with Saeko keeping any of the few corpses clear, me and Saya moved the barrels to the car.

Said car having three big square crates tied on its roof, the ropes going through the now open back doors.

(The car's suspensions must be cursing their existence right now.)

In the end, we fitted six barrels in the car, them taking over part of the back seats as well.

Which was the reason I ended up sitting on the roof by the time we were done. The last barrels was tied with the crates.

"The doors can't close." Saeko mumbles as she tries to close the back passenger door of the Humvee.

"Tie one rope on the door that is by the barrels and give it to me after you pass it through the other door on your side. Since the hatch is covered by the crates, I'll pull it to keep the door closed, and to keep me steady, your side of the door keep close the same way, too risky

to keep closed by hand." I respond. Saeko nods and enters the Humvee, only to pop up less than a minute later to hand me the end of the rope.

"Be careful not to fall alright?" She adds as she hands me the rope.

"No worries, I'm a profesional wind serfer." I chuckle as I take the rope.

"Really?" Saeko asks as she tilts her head.

"Yeeees?" I respond as I twirl the rope around my hand.

"... Just, be careful. Please." She answers back with a small sigh.

"I know. Don't worry." I nod back with a serious tone as I take a deep breath.

"Let's git. We wasted too much time here. And I want to sit and do nothing sooner than later." I add as I turn to look ahead, or, tried to, what with the crates in my face.

"By the way, will the car handle a jump with this much weight?" I ask as I pull out my radio.

" Naier dear, are you trying to insult my baby? I didn't customize it for it to be unable to do a flimsy jump with a few crates~ " The radio responds.

"Few crates that total to probable several tons..." I mumble.

Nonetheless, the car started with a roar. And headed straight towards the far end of the opposite side which we came from, towards the makeshift ramp that was made from the roofless trailer of a totaled rig. And Rika, didn't even seem to double think it, seeing how the car was picking up speed.

"Aren't we going a bit fa..." And before I could finish my sentence, we were on the ramp, and then, in the air. Going over a, not-so-small

congregation of corpses that had gathered on the other side.

And soon, I felt out self falling, yet, the landing that I expected to end with a loud crash of the car hitting the asphalt, ended up with more of a, squishing sound...

Why? Ask the corpses that volunteered to cushion the fall, since I just saw a dismembered hand getting yetted in the air along with a leg, and I think a spine?...

(Did the car just insta gib a corpse?...)

" *Wooo! That was fun! Are you still up there lov?* " The radio asks right after.

"Yea, I'm still in one piece. Now let's get the fuck out of here now no?" I respond.

" *Yes, sir-i~* " The radio merely responds.

"I also call dibs on the first bath." I add as I put the radio in my chest pocket. Getting a disapproving 'Hey!' from the radio.

(Now, with the GPS it should be easier to find the way back. After that, we can finally say we can relax a bit...)

Holy crap, and update! Yes, this was not abandoned, I just be very, very busy xD.

But, I can't disappoint my few supporters now can I xD? (Well I can, by posting crap, but lets not dwell on that no?)

A Rainy day

"The weather's not looking so hot." I mumble as I look at the sky while sitting on the humvee's hood. Trees zipping past us as Rika kept driving towards our home base.

"Well, not a bad thing. If it rains we can test the rain barrels. Also, I'd say the dark sky would help with the smoke from the corpse fire. But I see no smoke coming off from deeper inside the forest to begin with..." I add as I lower my head and lift my mask to rub my eyes, then let off a big yawn.

"I'm finally getting tired now that I'm relaxing huh?" I close my eyes and take a deep breath.

"You know, it's funny. But what I really look forward to right now is a very, very hot bath, and something frozen to drink. Guess that's how that one blue uniform-wearing vault boy felt after drinking a cold beer. Having left one certain vault and spending god knows how long in the wastes of the Commonwealth drinking piss warm beers." I chuckle as I turn to look toward the sky.

"Wonder if the peeps back at the base are done since I see no smoke." I sigh as I close my eyes again. The sound of shifting gears and engine roar overtaking whatever forest ambient noise you would expect to hear.

"*Naier. We are nearly there. How are you holding up there?*" And my radio speaks up.

"I'm fine enough to nearly fall asleep." I answer with a small chuckle.

"*You can sleep at the safe house, don't go snoozing off and falling off the roof.*" The radio responds.

"I know I know, don't worry. Besides, we still got some stuff to do before we can go snoozing off." I respond.

"And I don't mean taking a bath. With the weather looking all rainy. We better set them barrels pronto. And if we have any waterproof sheets to make some makeshift funnels for em, even better. " I respond.

" Already thinking ahead huh? Not a bad idea. Saeko, do you know of we have anything waterproof we can use? " The radio responds.

" Waterproof fabric? The best I can think of is any of the beach equipment we might have in the house. " A distant voice, Saeko, responds.

(Beach equipment, here? In the middle of the forest? Guess for swimming in the river? Or they helicoptered them selves to private beaches.)

"And umbrellas." I add.

" Yea, that too ." Saeko answers back.

" I think I saw some in the house now that I think about it. " Another voice, Saya's, responds

"Well, we could set that up first. Because the walls might need some, skill leveling." I continue as I glance at the packed crates.

"Reducing the underground water usage to just drinking it will probably be enough for the rainfall to replenish the used supply. And if not, to at least make it last much longer compared to using it for everything." I add.

" Is it safe to wash with rain water though? " Saeko asks.

"Well, we will have to boil it first, and we do have a heavy-duty filtering machine to pass it through, though its intended use was for personal, not for a whole household. We also can check if the taps in the house have any filters we can use. But yea. I would not risk drinking it as long as we got pre-outbreak proofed water. But it

should be good for a bath, watering stuff and washing. Plus we would have to boil the water anyway. Or do you want to take a cold bath?" I respond.

" *Hmm, you do have a point.* " Saeko answers back.

And soon after, we reached the zig-zag uphill road. In other words, we were almost back.

"I see no corpses around. Good" I mumble to myself.

And within a few minutes, the front gate came into view. Asami and Khota casually chatting in front of the slightly open gate. While Shizuka was using a hose to spray the now seemingly empty corpse pile with water.

"Hole sweet home huh." I lean to the side of the car to look at the ground, and shortly after, jump. Landing with a roll before getting back on my feet.

Then start to walk up towards Shizuka.

"How's the corpse-tree growing?" I ask as I turn to look at the hole, other than a few charred bones, and the occasional shimmer from the probable silverware a corpse was wearing, I could only see black ash.

"Ummm..." Shizuka looks at me, then at the hole, then back at me, her expression seemed, lost, and apologetic. Like a kid that just forgot its homework.

I just chuckle and look back at the hole.

"We should start burying them sooner or later. Just in case one of them had god mode on." I continue.

"Yea, Khota mentioned that too." Shizuka then nods a couple of times.

And speaking of said chubby gun nut, Khota walked up to us a few seconds later with Asami.

"Hey Naier. How did it go? I see the car is packed with crates. Oh. We also had to use some water to make sure the fire did not spread. Sorry about that, my idea." Khota then speaks up.

"Whaaaaat? Unexeptabaaaaale. You shall put all the water barrels in the yard as punishment." I respond with a deadpan tone.

"Also, we need to search for waterproof fabrics to increase the collection radius of each barrel." I add.

"Hmm yea, good point, the more space each barrel covers the better the efficiency." Khota nods and he puts his hand to his chin.

"I don't mean to interrupt! But can somebody open the gates?" Rika shouts from the humvee.

"Oh right!" Khota quickly turns to look at the gate, before starting to walk towards it with a quick pace.

"We should all head inside and start setting the things up, looks like it's going to rain soon, perfect timing to test this whole gig out." I add as I nod, and start heading towards the gate as well.

And so, upon entering the building. Letting the car in and closing the gate behind us, we parked the Humvee in front of the main building.

"I'll start unpacking and setting the barrels, somebody had to move the crates and start unpacking the things from inside them, if we can somehow move the crates in the house good, otherwise open the crates and start moving the cartons inside one by one." I say as I tap the Humvee, the others slowly exiting the car.

"I'll see what I can do to get the crates inside the garage, no point making the house look like a barn since we got space." Rika responds as she exits the car.

"Fair point." I answer as I grab one of the barrels.

"I will go find any waterproof fabric I can." Saeko then nods and turns to enter the building.

"I'll see if we have any books to read on how to correctly set the wall materials we got." Saya continues as she turns to also enter the building.

"Ummm, what should we do?" Asami asks right after.

"Hmm try to find some beams or supports for the barrels, we need four for each barrel, taller than the barrel itself, if we find any fabric that is." I respond as I turn to look around the front yard. Then at the house.

"Hmm, the roof drain is, there. We can put one barrel there, though we might have to cut part of the pipe so it ends at the barrel." I nod as I pull a barrel and put it over my shoulder.

"We should be glad we don't have to put some of these in the roof and plum them into the water taps..." I chuckle under my breath.

"Oh and maybe start unpacking the gardening stuff somewhere" I add as I start to walk.

With that, we spreaded out and started 'upgrading' the place...

Starting with setting the barrels all over the front yard.

Meanwhile, Rika moved the car closer to the second garage to see what she can do with the crates...

And, about 30 minutes later...

The first droplets fell from the sky.

"Hmm? It's starting to rain?" I tilt my head as I look at the blue barrel I had just placed on the ground in front of me, a few water droplets

appearing on it.

I then look up at the relatively darkened sky and lift my mask.

"Yep, that's dark alright." I blink a couple of times as I keep staring up.

"Everything alright?" A female voice then speaks up next to me. Turning to it, I find Saeko, holding what seemed to be a packed-up sheet.

"Yea, starting to rain it seems. Found anything?" I ask. Saeko just stares at me, before chuckling.

"Love, it had started raining for quite a while now. And yes, we had these waterproof car hoods in the garage, we could probably use them for a few of the barrels?" Saeko responds.

"It has? Never realized, and yes, these would do fine. A good wash and maybe a hole to tie in the center. One hood for each barrel would do. How many we found?" I ask back.

"Three. Khota and Asami are by the garage looking at the other two for any holes." Saeko answers flatly

"Hmm, better than nothing. Ok let's see what we can do." I nod as I wipe my hands on my pants, and start to walk towards the garage.

Taking my mask and balaclava off in the prosses, and passing them through my hand till they reached my shoulder.

"Oh, and Naier, can I have a second?" Saeko then speaks up from behind me.

I stop, turn around, and find her face right in front of mine, too close to mine.

Before I could speak, she pressed her lips against mine for a few seconds, before breaking off.

"Could not let such a chance slip by~" She adds with a small giggle. I just blink at her, then shrug and chuckle back.

We then both turned to head towards the garage.

Upon closing in, Kohta who was on the floor with the car waterproof coverings on his legs turned to look at us and raised his hand.

"Hey! We checked them both! They are all with, no mask?" Khota starts to speak, before turning to stare at me.

"Maskless car coverings. Intriguing." I respond flatly.

"Uhh, I mean they are both fine. Though they need a good wash. And we also found several umbrellas." He responds as he quickly shakes his head.

"Good good, how good is your survival DIY?" I ask as I fold my arms.

"Want me to install these three to the barrels?" He asks as he tilts his head. I nod.

"No prob, I can handle it just fine. If I remember from that survival game I played. We need to make them like a funnel. Hmmm." Khota nods back as he turns to look at the fabric while he starts to fold it.

"Do not cut the elastic band in the end so you can use it as tension balance with the steel poles Asami found, not too tight though as you want the center part to cave in, make a hole in the center, duct tape the hole to the barrel's lip. Done." And Khota starts to speak to himself.

"Just make sure they stick the poles in the soil well so they don't get pulled off from the tension. Call us if you need any help. I'm going inside the house for a few." I nod back as I make a thumbs up, and turn to head towards the main building. Saeko leaving the car covering she held with Khota and following behind me.

Upon reaching the house, I find Rika sitting on the sofa in the central room, smoking. She notices me and turns to wave.

"Done with my part chief, the crates are all in the garage~" She motions with her head towards the kitchen behind her, since the garage with the breakers was behind the kitchen.

"Aight, thanks." I nod back and start to take off my vest, then leave it on a chair next to me along with the helmet, mask, armguards and the such. Essentially taking off all of my 'armor'. Then, roll my shoulders.

"Damn, I feel way too light right now, got used to the weight." I chuckle as I make a few jumps.

"Monkying around I see." And a new female voice speaks up. Turning out to be non-other than Saya, who just entered the building, books in her hands.

"Yes, I am maximum Monke." I answer flatly as I turn to her. Saya stares at me for a few.

"At least you're not wearing that damn mask anymore" She adds as she walks up to the table in the middle of the room, in front of Rika, and leaves the books she was holding.

"So, guess we set the barrels and we can take a break?" Rika asks as she turns to me again.

"Aren't you already taking a break?" I ask as I fold my arms and tilt my head.

Rika leans one shoulder and narrows her eyes as she lifts her cigarette-holding hand at me, much like a dunk man.

"Actually, I am not taking a break. I am high alert in case I am needed somewhere." She adds with an expression that was essentially herself not believing her own words.

"Yeaaaaaaa. But yes, we do this, and we can make something to eat and take a break." I respond

"Oh, damn, now that you mention it, I'm starving! I'll go get Shishuka so she can start making something." Rika quickly responds as she springs off the sofa.

"She won't burn the house down?" Saya adds as she tilts her head.

"I'll watch over her." Rika waves her hand as she moves to head to the upper floor.

"She, did not deny it." Saeko adds with a tilted head.

"Ho boy, better start looking for a new safehouse I suppose..." I sigh with a chuckle as I turn to look outside.

"I'll go check if the front side of the gates is still clear, or if any corpses survived the burning session. Then lock up." I add as I turn to walk toward the exit.

"I'll go open the gate for you." Saya nods and turns to follow me, Saeko, just followed behind me again in silence.

And shortly after, I was by the now open gate. The rain slowly starting to pick up.

"Looks clear. Smoke's gone too." I respond as I look toward the now fully dark sky.

"And it seems we will have a heavy enough rain to test our barrel set up" I add as I take a deep breath.

"So, now what?" Saeko asks as she stops next to me.

"Now, we sit on our asses and hope the world does not implode on itself." I shrug.

"So this is it huh, we're staying here and letting the others deal with all the troubles." Saya, who also stopped next to me mumbles as she folds her arms under her chest.

"Yes. All I care about is to make sure 'we' are safe. Saving the damn world ain't my job. Nor is going on a final dramatic mission. Had enough drama to last me." I respond as I shrug again.

"Fine by me to be honest." Saeko shrugs slightly as she slowly slides her hand to mine.

"Uhh, yea, guess you're right." Saya nods with a solemn look as she keeps staring toward the zig-zag road. Then, looks at the sky.

"We are going to get soaked if we stay here much longer..." Saeko then adds as she lifts her hand to feel the cold droplets falling from the sky.

"I don't like the rain..." Saya mumbles as keeps looking up.

"Hey, chin up. It'll be sunny again eventually. Ain't most days in Japan sunny after all?..."

...

Welp, this is it folks, 3 years, 86 chapters. I'm going to put a full stop at the story here. Cause each chapter has been dragging on way too long now that i got zero time for such big undertakings xD

SO, now whut, I hear you ask?

That, means 4 things.

1. I know there are a lot of loose ends. But I don't have the time or strength to sit and write another epic atm. Stuff like that takes time and research so I don't end up writing complete bollocks, and I don't

have the time to do that anymore. Now, will there be a sequel/side story that ties everything into a little nice bow? Probably. But not in the foreseeable future. That, also means that **I am giving the free for all for whoever wants to do whatever with this story and it's characters. If you want to use em for your own story, use em. Remake the story, remake it. Write side stories for the still-hanging threads of story such as the merc group, write em. Add your own alpha-sigma-omega chad and kill Naier to prove how shit he is, go ahead, so you plebs can finally stop pestering me about his personality and life choices. Just you know, keep em in character.**

2. Interlude chapters. What I mean by these is. The story is over, and there won't be any more progression. BUT. I still like hotd as much I did 3 years ago xD. So, I intend to still write occasionally. BUT any new chapters that I might post(That will now be ever rarer for hotd) will essentially be of daily life, maybe they play video games and hold a tournament for who eats the pancakes, maybe they go to a beach and chase around Naier to put him in a speedo. Stuff that you can read in whatever order, and would still be the same.

3. I'll probably slowly continue my Kill la kill fic, since I hate leaving things without giving them a semblance of an end. I also want to try something new right now, which is to use the 3d models I make to make illustrations for my next story, so it could either be something from Tales of Vesperia, or monster girl encyclopedia. Now I'd say I want to keep things small, but knowing me, I'll derail into a 100+ chapter story sooner or later again xD, especially if I make the monster girl encyclopedia fic, which will probably be an unending adventure xD (Also get people to flip their panties off cause I'll make a no smut and lemons story in a monster girl fic xD)

4. A thank you for reaching the end!